12. D 1 i 12. 2. 7

SERMONS

ON

Several Occasions:

VIZ.

I. Reason our Guide in Religion.
II. Rules for the due understanding the Divine Attributes.
III. The Holy Scripture our Rule of Faith.
IV. The Right of all Christians to examine the Truth of all Things that are proposed to them as Articles of Faith.
V. A sincere Enquiry an Excuse for unwilling Errors.
VI. The Assurance of an happy Immortality from a virtuous Life.
VII. The Faith once delivered unto the Saints.
VIII. Of Heresy.
IX. Another Gospel.
X. The Nature of Absolution.
XI. Ritual Observations to give Place to Charity.

ALSO

An APPENDIX,

Proving that there can be no Assurance of *an Uninterrupted Succession of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons*, from the Days of the *Apostles*, to our present Times, but rather a strong Presumption, if not full Evidence to the contrary.

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3 L k 10

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

TO THE

Right Reverend Father in GOD,

BENJAMIN,

Lord Biſhop of

BANGOR.

My very good LORD;

I Should not have preſumed to dedicate theſe Sermons to a Perſon not inferior to any of your ſacred Order, had I not imagined that it would become me well to declare from whence I had taken occaſion to enter upon

theſe Diſcourſes, and from whoſe excellent Diſſertations they derive their Strength.

It would be, *my Lord*, not only Vanity, but even Inſolence in me, to imagine I can add either Strength or Beauty to your admirable Performances; but it is the Glory of theſe Sermons, that they are deſign'd to let the World know, that, after the Labour of many Years in Search of Truth, I have the Pleaſure of being fully ſatisfied in what your Lordſhip does aſſert; and that I have endeavour'd, if not to improve, yet to proceed upon your Principles in what I now offer to the World under your *Lordſhip*'s Patronage.

In your invincible Defenſe of your excellent Sermon againſt the unjuſt Cenſure of the Committee, your *Lordſhip* hath told us, what all your Writings fully teſtifie, that *in all you receive or reject*, you proceed upon the Principles of Reaſon, the

Declarations of the Goſpel, and the main Foundations of the *Reformation*; and you have excellently demonſtrated in your Introduction to that *triumphant Book*, the Neceſſity that lies upon all Men of *Reaſon*, all *Chriſtians*, and all *Proteſtants*, to do ſo: *For*, ſays your Lordſhip, *whatſoever is contrary to the firſt Notion of God, eſtabliſhed upon the Evidences of Reaſon, cannot be admitted by any one who believes a God upon thoſe Evidences, becauſe it deſtroys all thoſe Principles of Reaſon it ſelf. Whatſoever is contrary to the plain Deſign or Declarations of the Goſpel, cannot be received by any one, who believes the Goſpel, becauſe it deſtroys the very Goſpel which he believes. And whatſoever is contradictory to the fundamental Principles of the* Reformation, *without which it could never have been at firſt, and now can never be defended, cannot knowingly be receiv'd by*

any true Proteſtant, *becauſe it deſtroys his very Title to that Name, and the very Thing which, as Proteſtant, He receives.*

Now, *my Lord*, in full accord with theſe Principles, the firſt of theſe Sermons proves that, in all Caſes in which we are obliged to judge at all of what is true or falſe, good or evil, juſt or unjuſt, what is a Revelation from God, and what is the true Senſe or Import of that Revelation, we can judge only by that Faculty of Reaſon God hath given us, and that nothing can be an Article of Faith which we cannot underſtand, becauſe it cannot be revealed to him who cannot know the Meaning of it. And I humbly conceive that in this Sermon, I have eſtabliſhed this Principle beyond all reaſonable Contradiction.

The Second Sermon was deſign'd to correct the falſe Notions many have conceived of the Divine Perfections,

fections, and to ſhew that we muſt either have juſt Notions of thoſe Divine Perfections we are obliged to imitate, to muſt be bound to imitate we know not what, and conſequently that we may juſtly infer, as in your excellent *Preſervative* your *Lordſhip* often does, that what is inconſiſtent with Divine Goodneſs, and Juſtice, cannot be true; and that it is highly unreaſonable to conceive that He, who is the Lover of the Souls of Men, ſhould have made their eternal Happineſs to depend upon that which no Man living can be acquainted with to his Satisfaction, *p.* 78, 79.

The Third Sermon confirms your *Lordſhip*'s Second Principle, and the Doctrine of the *Church of England*, That the *Holy Scripture is our only Rule of Faith, and that it doth, with a ſufficient Fulneſs and Clearneſs, contain all things neceſſary to be believ'd and done in order to the*

Salvation of a Christian. And here, *my Lord*, as I can never sufficiently commend the Wisdom of our *Church*, in asserting this Truth so fully in her first and second *Homily*, in requiring the whole Clergy to subscribe to her 6th, 20th, and 21st *Articles*, which fully do assert this Doctrine, and not permitting either *Priest* or *Bishop* to enter into Holy Orders, till they have not only declared their Belief of it, but have also promised *to teach nothing as necessary to Salvation which they are not persuaded may be fully proved from thence*; so can I never *worthily* lament that open Deviation of too many, who would be deemed the best Members of this *Church*, from this true *Protestant* and only *Christian* Rule of Faith, by asserting the necessity of believing many speculative Opinions, which never can be proved from the clear Evidence of *Scripture*, and the like necessity of many Practices which have

no Foundation at all there. And I would humbly entreat these Men to consider seriously, how they will be able to avoid *St Paul's Anathema*, which I have proved in one of these Sermons, as certainly doth belong to all others who make any Doctrine or Practices not contained in *Scripture* necessary to Salvation, as to the *Church of Rome*; So that it much concerns them either to shew that they are not concerned in this *Anathema*, or to avoid the Terror of it. I read, my *Lord* in your admirable Preservative with equal Pleasure, and Satisfaction these Words of Truth, *viz.* 'It is a Scandal 'to the *Church of England* to suppose that it hath any peculiar Doctrines (seeing) it knows no other 'Rule but the *Gospel*, and always 'appeals to that for the Truth of 'every Thing taught in it. The '*Reformers* who settled our Worship, our *Articles*, and *Homilies*

'were not only fallible Men, but in 'one of the Articles ſolemnly pro-'feſs themſelves as well as others, 'all *Churches* equally, all *General* 'Councils equally ſo to be: And 'in another *Article* they expreſsly 'require all in their Communion 'to take the *Scriptures*, (*i. e.* 'not themſelves) for the Rule of 'their Faith and Practiſe. And 'conſequently the certain Truth of 'any Doctrine is not put by our *re-*'*formed Church* upon its being the 'Doctrine, or the peculiar Doctrine 'of our *Church*, but of the *Scrip-*'*tures*.

The 4*th* Sermon is entirely employed in aſſerting and confirming that which you truly, and judiciouſly call the *noble fundamental Principle of the Reformation. That 'tis the common Right of all Chriſtians to try, and to examine by thoſe Scriptures their Rule of Faith and Manners, all Things which*

are

are delivered to them as Articles of Chriſtian Faith revealed, or Chriſtian Duties required in Holy Scriptures. There being no Medium betwixt being obliged to uſe my own Judgment to diſcern what is an *Article of Faith*, and being obliged to acquieſce in the Judgment of others as to what is ſo: The *firſt* is the Foundation of the *Proteſtant Religion*, and the Denyal of it is the Subverſion of it: The *ſecond* is the fundamental Principle of *Popery*, without which they confeſs their Faith uncertain, and without Foundation.

Moreover the Denyal of private Men's Capacity to judge for themſelves, puts all Sects of Religion upon a Level as to Them; for they who are not able to judge for themſelves in Affairs of Religion, muſt alſo be unable to prefer one Religion above another, and to diſcern a greater Truth, and Excellency in one

one than in another. These Arguments I have had the Honour to transcribe from your *Lordship*, and the Strength of them shews the Author.

The Sermon concerning *Sincerity*, and the Arguments to prove the Sufficiency of an impartial Search to find the Will of God declared in *Scripture*, and to act according to it, to procure the Favour of God here, and Happiness with him hereafter, is so entirely what I learnt from your *Lordship*, and from *Mr. Kettlewell*, that the chief Excellency of it consists in this, that it agrees with the Sentiments of Persons of the cleareſt Heads, the exacteſt Judgments, and moſt indiſputable Integrity.

And as it is acknowledg'd by all Men of Judgment, that a good, and juſt God cannot require any Man to do, as a Condition of Salvation, that which he is not able to perform

perform by any Power He hath imparted to him, ſo it ſeems equally abſurd to ſay, this good, and righteous God requires of any Man, for the Enjoyment of his Favour, that he ſhould know what, after his impartial Endeavour, and the ſincereſt Uſe of all the Means which God hath put into his Hand, he was not able to diſcern. And therefore, as in all my reading, I cannot find that this was ever made a Controverſy before, ſo I believe it never would have been ſo now, had not the Rage of ſome againſt your *Lordſhip* tranſported them beyond the Bounds of *Equity* and Reaſon. And I crave Leave humbly to ask the *learned Committee*, whether that which they think neceſſary, beſides Sincerity, for the obtaining the divine Favour, may be known by a ſincere Enquirer after the Will of God, or not; if it may, it muſt be comprehended under

that

that *Sincerity* which includes the Uſe of all thoſe Means which God hath put into his Power; if it cannot be known by him, it muſt be owned that God hath made the Knowledge of Something requiſite to the Salvation of a ſincere upright Man, which He hath never put into his Power to know.

The Sermon which attempts to prove that *ritual Obſervances and ceremonial Inſtitutions ought to give place to Acts of Charity and Mercy, and may be lawfully neglected, when otherwiſe an Act of Charity and Mercy to the Bodies or the Souls of Men muſt be omitted,* concludes with an Appendix demonſtrating that there hath been *no regular uninterrupted Succeſſion of Prieſts and Biſhops in the Church of Rome from the twelfth Century to the Reformation,* and conſequently that the Neceſſity of ſuch a *regular Succeſſion* can neither cer-

certainly be known, nor truly be aſſerted; and this confirms the Truth of all you have advanced upon that Subject, and in particular, *That it is not only probable, but certain that an uninterrupted regular Succeſſion has not been kept, upon all hiſtorical Evidence which we receive in other Caſes.*

The Sermon which attempts to prove that *the Power of thoſe who are improperly called Prieſts, to remit or to retain Sins,* to *bind* or *looſe,* can *be only declarative, and not operative,* and conſequently can have no Effect with Relation to the *Favour of God,* or as to the State of Men *in the other World,* as it maintains what is Self-evident from this Conſideration, that no Declaration can make a Thing to be what it was not before, but if it be according to Truth, muſt preſuppoſe the Thing to be what it is declared to be, and therefore, in this Caſe, muſt neceſſa-

neceſſarily ſuppoſe God hath forgiven him, whom we declare to be forgiven, and hath retained him under the Guilt of Sin, whom we declare to be under the Guilt of Sin; ſo it agrees with that which you clearly have demonſtrated in your judicious Anſwer to the *Committee* in theſe Words, 'A Sentence 'or Puniſhment of Men which 'makes not the leaſt Alteration in 'the Eyes of God with Reſpect to 'the ſpiritual Condition of a *Chri-* 'stian, cannot be ſaid to have *any* 'Effect in the other World, but the 'ſpiritual Puniſhments inflicted by 'the *Church* are of that Sort, 'therefore they have no Effect in 'the other World; that the ſpiritu- 'al Puniſhments of the *Church* make 'no Alteration in the Condition of 'a Man with Reſpect to the Fa- 'vour or Diſpleaſure of *Almighty* 'God is plain from hence, that 'ſuppoſing they are wrongfully in-

'dicted

'flicted upon a *Chriſtian*, he is, 'notwithſtanding them, equally in 'the Favour of God. And on the 'other Hand, ſuppoſing no ſuch 'Puniſhments inflicted (by the 'Church) upon a vile and wick-'ed *Chriſtian*, he is nevertheleſs 'under the Diſpleaſure of *Almigh-'ty God*, to an equal Degree as 'he would be, if it were inflicted.' Hence Mr. *Stebbing*, who wants not Senſe, but lyes under a deplorable Want of Honeſty, confeſſes, that *as to the State of thoſe who are excommunicated with Reſpect to the Favour of God, the Church neither doth, nor can pretend to meddle with it, ſo as by her Sentence to make it either better, or worſe.*

The other three Sermons being deſign'd to ſhew (1*ſt*,) What is the one Faith once, and at once delivered to the Saints, and that this Faith being fully contained in the holy *Scriptures*, there can be no new

Makers of *Hereſy*, or of Articles neceſſary to be believed unto Salvation; that is, nothing can afterwards become an *Hereſy*, merely becauſe it is repugnant to the Sentiments of the *Fathers*, the *Decrees* of *Councils*, *Eccleſiaſtical Tradition*, or the *Doctrine of the Church in future Ages*. For there is only *one Lawgiver who is able to ſave, and to deſtroy*. The Terms of the new Covenant of Grace are already fix'd in *Scripture*, and Salvation is annex'd to the performance of them, and the final Sentence will be paſt by *Chriſt*, not with regard to the Words of Men, but to the *Word of God*. (2*dly*,) That Faith neither is nor can be farther neceſſary to be believed, than it is neceſſary to produce that Holineſs of Life to which the Promiſe of Salvation is annexed, and that Obedience which the *Apoſtle* ſtiles *the Obedience of Faith*. And (3*dly*,) that *Hereſy* being *a Work of the Fleſh*, no *good* Man can be, in

the *Scripture* Senſe, an *Heretick*. Though I cannot ſay, they were originally intended to ſhew my Agreement in theſe Points with your *Lordſhip*'s Sentiments, yet being all deſign'd to promote that Charity *which is the Bond of Peace and of all Virtues*; to rebuke that furious Humour and that Proneneſs which is too viſible in many to pronounce Damnation upon their *Chriſtian Brethren*, and by ſo doing to uſurp the Prerogative of that One Lawgiver, *who is able to ſave, and to deſtroy*; and to abate that bitter Zeal and Rancour of Spirit, which, ſays the ſame *Apoſtle*, is *earthly, ſenſual*, and *deviliſh*. I humbly conceive they will on theſe Accounts be acceptable to a Perſon of your extenſive Charity, who in your Sermon, (whoſe great Crime was that it delivered certain, but ingrateful Truths, and adviſed *Chriſtians* to yield *a cloſe and immediate Subjection to their ſpiritual King*) hath taught us *that*

Religion is Virtue and Charity, under the Belief of a Supreme Governour and Judge, and in your excellent Anſwer to the Repreſentation, 'That the *Order which Chriſt* lays 'the great Streſs upon in his Kingdom, is an internal Order, the Government of Mens Lives by *Faith working by Love*, the Order of Charity and Humility, of *preferring one another in Love*, of *forbearing* and *forgiving one another*, of making all reaſonable Allowances, and compaſſionating one another's Infirmities.'

Your *Lordſhip* may hence ſee what Right you have to theſe Diſcourſes, they being, (ſaving the Weakneſs and Infirmities of the Compoſer) chiefly Deductions from your ſolid Principles; And if in any thing I have advanc'd them farther than your great Wiſdom led me, this chiefly reſts upon your Lorſhip; for on my Part it can only be ſaid. *Facile eſt inventis addere.* They

They are not dreſs'd up with the Embelliſhments of Wit and Rhetorick, as being not deſign'd to pleaſe the Fancy, or to gratifie the Ear, but to convince the Judgment, and confirm the Truth: And what Advantage Eloquenee and Wit can give to Truth, or what Conviction they can adminiſter to the Underſtanding, I am yet to learn: Good Senſe, and and ſolid Arguments delivered in clear Expreſſions, and without ſuperfluity of Words, is all that to me ſeemeth either requiſite or proper in controverſial Diſcourſes.

Theſe Sermons, my *good Lord*, ſuch as they are, I humbly crave leave to dedicate to your great ſelf; that is, to the *glorious Defender of the Royal Authority of our bleſſed Lord*, our ſole Lawgiver and Judge; to the Aſſertor of the *Liberty of Conſcience*, from the Fetters of humane Authority in Religion trampling upon the Conſciences of *Chriſt*'s Subjects;

jects; to him who hath fix'd the Terms of our Salvation, as *God* and *Chriſt* himſelf hath done, on our Obedience to his Laws, and placed *true and undefiled Religion* in the Heart, and ſo made him alone the Judge of it who is the Searcher of all Hearts; To him who hath entailed the Favour of God upon Sincerity, in the Belief and Practiſe of what he hath enabled us to know we ought both to believe and do: To him, laſtly, who hath eſtabliſhed our happy *Reformation* upon its true and only Baſis, and hath preſerved it from being crucify'd betwixt two Thieves, or equally deſtructive Adverſaries, the *Profeſt Roman Catholick*, and the *Proteſtant Papiſt*; the firſt condemning it as *Heretical* and *Schiſmatical* for departing from the Church of *Rome*; the ſecond, if he will be conſiſtent with his Principles, laying

ing us under a Neceſſity of returning to it.

That God of his great Mercy would long preſerve your *Lordſhip*, one of the brighteſt Luminaries, the greateſt Ornaments, the beſt Defenders of the *Church of England*, and a ſecond *Chillingworth* againſt *Popery*: That He would raiſe up more Labourers in the ſame Vineyard, ſtill to confound the Adverſaries of thoſe important Truths you have ſo ſtrenuouſly aſſerted, and ſo irrefragably confirmed; That He would make all who pretend a Kindneſs for you, ſincerely, couragiouſly and zealouſly your Friends: That in his good Time He would convert, or *clothe thoſe Enemies with Shame*, who *daily wreſt your Words*, and *all whoſe Imagination is to do you Evil*; and that He would at laſt enable you, by your conſpicuous Example *of the Meekneſs and Gentleneſs*

ness of Christ, to overcome their Evil with your Good, is the devout Prayer of,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's just Admirer,

most sincere Friend, and

very humble Servant,

Daniel Whitby.

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SERM.

SERMON I.

LUKE xii. 57.

And why, even of your Selves judge ye not what is right?

IT hath been of old, and is at preſent, a very common, but a very ſenſeleſs Queſtion, *who ſhall judge?* Since in all Caſes, in which Men are concern'd to paſs any Judgment, they only can do it by that Faculty, which alone is given them to judge by, that is, they muſt do it by that Reaſon, by which alone they can diſcern betwixt Truth and Falſe-

hood, Juſt and Unjuſt, Right and Wrong. For that we do diſcern betwixt theſe Things, is certain from Experience; And that We do this by the Exerciſe of our Reaſon, is as certain. For Judgment muſt be either irrational, or founded upon Reaſon. Moreover, to judge, is to conclude that this, or that, is ſo, or not ſo. Now all Concluſions are inferr'd from Premiſſes; and to infer one Thing from another, is to reaſon. It may be true that our Saviour's Argument here, chiefly relates to the Signs of his Coming, and to his Calling of the *Jews* to Faith, and Repentance; but then it is as true, that the Propoſition contain'd in theſe Words, *We of our ſelves muſt judge what is Right*, extends to all Caſes, in which we are oblig'd to judge, for a *Quatenus, ad omne valet Argumentum*; i. e. where the Reaſon in all Caſes is the ſame, the Truth muſt, in thoſe Caſes, be the ſame.

Thus, ſeeing *Peter*, and *Paul* are therefore mortal, becauſe they were born of mortal Parents; All Men being born of mortal Parents, muſt be mortal, on the ſame Account. And in like manner, the *Jews* and others being enabled to judge, of the Signs of the *Meſſiah*, and of the Duties of Faith, and Repentance, only by that Reaſon, which God had given them to judge of theſe Things by; it follows,

lows, that in all Caſes in which we are oblig'd to judge at all, we muſt judge by our Reaſon; becauſe God hath given us no other Faculty to judge by.

Hence it is evident, that in all Caſes, in which we are oblig'd to paſs a Judgment, we muſt, and can be only guided by our Reaſon. This Doctrine is here clearly delivered by Him, of whoſe Veracity we cannot reaſonably doubt. For by enquiring, (*wherefore do ye not judge what is Right?*) He ſuppoſeth, that we have ſufficient Means to do ſo. It being abſurd to ask, why Men do not that, which we know they have not Ability to do. And by adding, why do you not this *of yourſelves?* He doth as plainly teach, that we have in, and from ourſelves, ſufficient Means to judge what is right. Since then it has been prov'd, that it is only by our Reaſon that we diſcern betwixt Truth and Falſehood, Right and Wrong; it clearly follows, that in all Caſes in which we are oblig'd to paſs this Judgment, we muſt be guided by our Reaſon. And this Truth is evident to a Demonſtration. For whatſoever I believe or aſſent to; either I have Reaſon to aſſent to it, or I have not; If I have not; then (1) my Aſſent muſt be irrational. For where I have no Reaſon to aſſent, I muſt do it without Reaſon. It alſo muſt be (2*dly*)

uncertain, and precarious, or an Aſſent as well to Falſehood, as to Truth; Since, if I have no Reaſon to believe, that I aſſent to what is true; I can have no Certainty, that I do not aſſent to what is falſe: For the only Certainty that I can have, that I do not aſſent to what is falſe, is this, that I have Evidence, or rational Inducement to believe it true. If therefore whatever I believe, or aſſent to; I therefore do believe, becauſe my Reaſon judgeth it is true; then Reaſon is my Guide and Judge, in all that I believe. To illuſtrate this by ſome few Inſtances; I have Reaſon to believe the Holy *Scripture* is the Word of God, or I have not; If I have Reaſon to believe it ſo to be, my Reaſon doth induce Me to believe it is God's Word. If I have not, I muſt act unreaſonably, in judging that It is his Word, Yea, I muſt have equal Reaſon to disbelieve this Article. For I cannot have leſs Reaſon to disbelieve this, than none at all. So that if I have no Reaſon to believe this, I muſt at leaſt have as much Reaſon, to believe it is not ſo. *(2dly.)* When I judge, that any Text of *Scripture* bears that Senſe I put upon it, Either I have Reaſon to judge ſo, or I have not. If I have not; I do unreaſonably judge, that Text requires that Senſe. If I have Reaſon to judge ſo, my Reaſon doth induce me to believe,

believe, it bears that Sense: And this will still be more evident, if we reflect upon the gross Absurdities, and pernicious Consequences, which flow from the Denyal of this Truth, *that Reason is fit to be our Guide in Matters of Religion.* For,

(1) This lays this evil Imputation upon our gracious God, that he requires Men, upon Pain of his severe Displeasure, to believe those Articles, and to perform those Duties, which they have no sufficient Ground, or Reason to believe, or do. For no Man can assent to any thing, as an *Article of Faith*, till he sees Reason sufficient to convince Him, that it is revealed by God in *Scripture*. Nor can He judge, it is his necessary Duty to believe, to do, or to avoid that, which He hath no sufficient Reason to believe, God hath requir'd Him to believe, to do, or to avoid. When therefore Men give Reason ill Names, calling it *weak*, and *blind*, and *carnal Reason* (it being certain, that God hath given us no other Faculty, by which we can discern or judge, what is Matter of our Faith and Duty,) this must be in Effect, to charge God with this blasphemous Imputation, that He hath left all Men, in Things on which their everlasting Interests depend, to a Blind, Weak, Uncertain, and Deceitful Guide.

It is indeed Reaſon ſufficient, to induce ev'ry Man to believe, this or that Doctrine is an Article of Faith, that 'tis a Doctrine revealed by that God, who cannot lie: Since He, who will not believe God's Word, doth ſcarce believe his Being. But then, in Order to our Aſſurance, that ſuch a Doctrine is of divine Revelation, our Reaſon muſt enable us to diſcern; (1) That the Revelation pretended is indeed Divine. And (2*dly*) That the Senſe, in which it is propos'd to be believ'd, contains the certain Meaning of the Words. And in this all Men ſeem agreed: Seeing all Commentators on the *Holy Scriptures*, ancient or modern, *Proteſtant*, or *Papiſt*, endeavour to confute that Senſe of *Scripture*, they reject, from the ſuppos'd Abſurdities which follow from It, that is, from Reaſon: And to confirm that Senſe of *Scripture*, they embrace, by thoſe Reaſons they allege for the Truth of It. And ſo both of them do conſent in this, that Reaſon is to be the Judge of the true Senſe of *Scripture*.

Moreover, to quarrel with the Uſe of Reaſon in religious Matters, upon this Account, that it is weak, and fallible, is in Effect to quarrel with *Religion*, and to expoſe it to the Scoffs of *Infidels*, and *Theiſts*. For the Certainty of our whole Faith, depends upon the Certainty of that Reaſon,

Reaſon, we have to believe it true; and ſo muſt ſtand, or fall together with it. If we reject the Uſe of Reaſon here, we level the beſt Religion in the World, with the wildeſt and moſt abſurd *Enthuſiaſm*.

(2*dly*) Without the Uſe of Reaſon, to underſtand the true Senſe and Meaning of the Words, in which our Faith, or Duty is propos'd; the *Scripture* can be of little, or no Uſe unto us. For ſince the Objects of our Faith, are all contain'd in the Holy Scripture which is our only Rule of Faith, and are convey'd unto Us, only by the true Senſe and Meaning of the Words of Scripture; the *Holy Scripture* in this Caſe, muſt be as uſeleſs to Us, as our Reaſon is ſuppos'd to be. For how can we diſcern, what Words of Scripture declare the Mind of God to Us; or draw any Conſequences from them, or apply any general Rules or Directions they afford, to our own Caſes, or judge what Words muſt be taken literally, what only figuratively, without the Exerciſe of our Underſtanding uſeing the Principles of Reaſon, to find out the true Meaning of the Words of *Scripture*. If it be any juſt Objection againſt the Uſe of Reaſon in this Caſe, that Men's Reaſonings vary much, and that ſeems reaſonable to one, which in the Judgment of others is irrationall; our Interpretation of *Scripture* being

alſo various, and that which ſeems to be the true Senſe of it to one Party, is deem'd abſurd, and perhaps *Heretical* by another Party; this Objection muſt have an equal Strength, againſt the Uſe of Scripture in Matters of Religion, as againſt the Uſe of Reaſon; and muſt deſtroy the fundamental Principle of the Proteſtant Religion, which is this, that *Holy Scripture doth with ſufficient Clearneſs and Perſpicuity, deliver all Things neceſſary to be believ'd or done by Chriſtians, in order to their eternal Salvation.* And that *Nothing, which cannot be thus proved from* It, *ought to be own'd, or impos'd as an Article of Faith.* So our *vith* Article.

Now the Inferences, which clearly follow from this Truth are theſe,

(1.) That no Man can believe, what He doth not, or cannot underſtand. For then He muſt believe, He knows not what; and ſo muſt do it, without all Ground and Reaſon. For I can paſs no Judgment of the Truth or Falſehood, of what I do not underſtand. And you may as reaſonably require a Man to believe, what you ſpeak to him in an unknown Language, as in Words He cannot underſtand. The ſole Foundation of divine Faith is Revelation. Now how is that reveal'd to any Man, which he no more underſtands after, than He did before the

the pretended Revelation? Moreover, to believe, is to aſſent to the Truth of what is teſtify'd. Now Aſſent, is the Action of the Mind or Underſtanding, and it is that alone, which paſſeth Judgment of the Truth or Fallehood of a Propoſition; and that it doth, only upon ſome View of Evidence. Now that is only in the Mind. Where Error is in the Judgment, there muſt be a right Judgment and a true Underſtanding. For Error is only a wrong Judgment or Miſunderſtanding of the Thing, we paſs a Judgment upon; and did the Will of Neceſſity concur, in all erroneous Judgment, no Man could err unwillingly. And all this is confirm'd by St *Paul*, with the fulleſt Evidence, 1 *Ep. Cor. xiv. ch.* where He ſaith; (1) *He that ſpeaketh in an unknown Tongue, ſpeaketh not to Man; for no Man underſtands him*, v. 2. Whence it is evident, that not to ſpeak to Man, and to ſpeak what He doth not underſtand, is the ſame Thing; and that no wiſe Perſon, much leſs an All-wiſe God, would thus ſpeak to Man. He adds, v. 6, that *If He Himſelf ſhould come to them ſpeaking with a Tongue not underſtood, He could not profit them; therefore He had rather ſpeak five Words, with his Underſtanding* ſo employ'd, *that by his Voice He might profit Others, than ten thouſand Words in an*

an unknown Tongue. v. 19. Whence it is certain, that no Man can profit, or teach others, by ſpeaking that, which they do not underſtand. So that if God himſelf, if our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, or his inſpir'd *Apoſtles*, have ſpoken any thing of this Nature, needful to be believed or done; they have taught no Body, they have ſpoken unprofitably, and not to the Edification of the Church. It alſo is obſervable from theſe Words, v. 4. *What ſhall I profit you, unleſs I ſpeak by Revelation, by Knowledge, or by Doctrine*; that what is ſpoken in a Language not underſtood by the Hearer, affords no Revelation of the Speaker's Mind, teaches no Doctrine, conveys no Knowledge or Inſtruction to the Hearer. So that if the Words of God, contain'd in *Scripture*, cannot be underſtood by us, they contain no Revelation made by God, they convey no Doctrine to Us, nor do they afford Us any Knowledge or Inſtruction. (2*dly*,) The *Apoſtle* adds, that from Words not eaſy to be underſtood, or not containing ἔυσημον λόγον, a *clear and certain Senſe*, no Knowledge can be gained. *For* ſaith He, *Except you ſpeak Words eaſy to be underſtood, How ſhall it be known what is ſpoken?* Wherefore unleſs God in his Word, hath ſpoken Things eaſy to be underſtood, in all Things neceſſary to be believed or done,

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in order to our Salvation; how can it be known what He hath ſpoken. (3*dly*) He that ſpeaketh Things not underſtood, *ſpeaketh to the Air*, that is, vain and unprofitable Words, and is a *Barbarian to Him that hears Him*; *becauſe He knows not the Meaning of his Voice.* To ſay then that God ſpeaks thus to Men, in what He doth require them to believe or do, is virtually to charge Him, with ſpeaking vain, and unprofitable Words. (4*thly*) He avers, that no Man can yield an Aſſent to what He doth not underſtand. For if *thou prayeſt, or giveſt Thanks in an unknown Tongue, how ſhall He that is unlearned ſay*, Amen, *at thy giving Thanks*; ſeeing *He underſtands not what thou ſayeſt?* Now this Reaſon is of the ſame Force, with Reference to all Sayings, Doctrines, and Inſtructions, coming from God, or Man. So that He who cannot underſtand them, cannot aſſent to them, as Articles of Faith, or Rules of Living. (5*thly*) Hence we may learn, in what Senſe an Article of Faith may be truly ſaid to be above Reaſon. This ought to be well underſtood; becauſe, as Mr. *Glanvil* truly ſays, Religion is by 'ſome Men ſet ſo much above 'Reaſon, that at length it is put beyond 'Sobriety and Senſe; and then it is fit to 'be believed, when it is impoſſible to be 'proved, or to be underſtood.' If then Λογ. Θρησκ. p. 21.

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it be ſaid, that any Article of Faith is ſo much above Reaſon, that human Reaſon cannot underſtand the Senſe or Import of the Words, in which it is contain'd; this muſt be falſe: Since then it cannot be an Article of Faith, as being not revealed to Man's Underſtanding. It is not ſpoken to Man, ſaith St. *Paul*, nor can he yield aſſent to it; becauſe He doth not underſtand it. Or (*2dly*) the Meaning is this only, that we cannot diſcern or underſtand, how it is what it is revealed to be; and then the Manner how, can be no Article of Faith for the ſame Reaſon. Or (*3dly.*) the Meaning is, that the Articles of pure Revelation, *viz.* that of the ſacred Trinity, God manifeſted in the Fleſh, the Reſurrection of the Body, *&c.* are ſuch as human Reaſon, without a Revelation, could never have found out, or aſſur'd Us of; and this is very true: But then 'tis well conſiſtent with our Underſtanding of them, when they are reveal'd, and as far as they are reveal'd. Hence

(*3dly.*) We may underſtand, in what Senſe it may be truly ſaid, that any Doctrine is a *Myſtery*. For, if by that Word, they who ſpeak thus, only intend to ſignify, that 'tis imperceptible or inconceivable as to the Manner how it is; this is only to tell Me; that the Manner how, is

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not reveal'd; and ſo can be no Object of divine Faith. And in this Senſe, to ſay *Chriſtianity is not myſterious*, that is, it hath revealed nothing which as to the Manner how it is, is inconceivable, is a great Miſtake. Thus. *v. g.* that God is omniſcient, omnipreſent, and that He will raiſe the Dead, we are oblig'd ſtedfaſtly to believe; becauſe God hath plainly reveal'd theſe Things to our Underſtandings. But how a Spirit is ev'ry where preſent, how God knows future Contingencies, or how he will raiſe the Dead; we neither are, nor can we be, oblig'd to believe; becauſe this is not revealed to Us. So that where our Underſtanding faileth, or is non-plus'd, our Faith is not required. But if Men intend by theſe Words to ſignify, that the Article, which is the Object of my Faith, is inconceivable, or that I cannot underſtand it, as far as it is reveal'd, they talk abſurdly, requiring Me to believe I know not what, and to do this, I know not why. Since I can paſs no Judgment, of the Truth or Falſehood of the Thing, which I cannot perceive or underſtand. And therefore in this Senſe, to ſay that any Article of *Chriſtian* Faith is *myſterious*, or that it is unintellegible by human Underſtanding, muſt be falſe. And indeed the true Import of the Word *Myſtery* is this, that *It is a Thing conceal'd from*,

from, or not made known to them, to whom it is a Myſtery. It is originally derived from the Hebrew Word *Miſtor* or *Miſtur*, which ſignifies a thing hidden or conceal'd. It is, ſay all the *Grammarians* and *Heathen* Writers on this Subject, that which Men muſt keep cloſe, καὶ μηδενὶ ἐκφαίνειν, *and not declare to any one.* For they who were initiated into the *Heathen Myſteries*, were to ſtop their Mouths, and to diſcloſe the Secret to None. So *Petronius*, *Euſtachius*, *Heſychius*, the Scholiaſt upon *Ariſtophanes*, *Etymologicon Mega*, *Cælius Rhodiginus*, *Suidas*, and *Phavorinus*. And this Import it conſtantly bears in the Language of the *Holy Scripture*. So it is there ſix Times us'd by *Daniel*, in his Interpretation of *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Dream, ſaying, there is a God, ἀποκαλύπτων μυστήρια, *revealing Secrets*. So is it us'd by St *Paul*, ſaying, *He that ſpeaketh in an unknown Tougue*, λαλεῖ μυστήρια *ſpeaketh Myſteries*, that is Things *which no Man underſtandeth*. To tell or ſhew a Myſtery, is to tell, or ſhew a Thing, of which they to whom it is told were ignorant before. As in theſe Words; *Brethren, I would not have you ignorant of this Myſtery.* And again, *Behold, I ſhew ye a Myſtery.* Rom. xi. 15, 1 Cor. xv. 17.

Dan. 2. 27, 28.
1 Cor. 14. 2.

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To ſpeak a Myſtery, is to ſpeak a Thing not known before; as when 'tis ſaid, this is *a great Myſtery*; *but I ſpeak of Chriſt and his Church.* And when a Myſtery is revealed or made known, it ceaſeth to be a Myſtery. And in this Senſe *the Goſpel is the Wiſdom of God in a Myſtery*; becauſe it was ſo, ſaith *Theodoret*, before it was revealed to the Holy *Apoſtles*, by the Spirit. The Myſtery of Chriſt, is the *Myſtery now revealed to the Saints.* The Myſtery of Godlineſs mentioned, 1 *Tim.* iii. 16. is in every Part of It, there revealed. The Miniſters of the Goſpel are *the Diſpenſers of theſe Myſteries*; and they do καταγγελλειν, *declare* to others, the Myſteries of God. The preaching of the Goſpel, is the *Revelation of the Myſtery hid from many Ages; but now made manifeſt to the Saints.* And by their preaching of it, they are ſaid φωτιζειν to enlighten all Men with the Knowledge of it. To *make known the Myſtery of the Goſpel*, Eph. iii. 9. Col. i. 26. is to manifeſt to the Saints the Myſtery hid from former Ages. So that whatſoever is a Goſpel-Myſtery is μυστηριον γνωριζόμενον Eph. iii. 3. φωτιζομενον ver. 9. ἀναγγελλομενον 1 Cor. ii. 1. φανερομένον, made known, brought to Light, declared, made manifeſt; and ſo after the Revelation, muſt ceaſe to be a Myſtery. And what is ſtill

Eph. 5. 32.

1 Cor. 2. 7.

Eph. 3. 3.

1 Cor. 4. 1.

1 Cor. 2. 1.

Rom. 16. 25, 26.

Eph. 3. 9.

a Myſtery to Us, is not by Revelation from God made known or manifeſted to Us; and ſo can be no Article of our Faith.

Now in Anſwer to this it is ſaid, 'that 'they are agreed to call Things above 'their Comprehenſion, by the Name of 'Myſteries; and the Meaning of the 'Word, is ſo determin'd, and ſettled in 'the Controverſy in Hand, that every 'one knows what is to be *underſtood* by It 'in *this Queſtion*.' To this I reply; that to fix a Word to a Senſe, it never bears in any Author ſacred or prophane; (as I have ſhewn theſe Men have done) is not to ſettle, but to unſettle it, by putting a falſe Senſe upon it: And to do this, with Reſpect to a Revelation delivered in the *Holy Scripture* which cannot be known by inward, but only by outward Evidence, is to give it a Senſe, contrary to what it bears in H. *Scripture*. To give a parallel Inſtance; the *Roman Commentators*, upon theſe Words, *the Gates of Hell* or Hades *ſhall not prevail againſt the Church*, that is, againſt the true and genuine Members of it; do generally ſay, that by the Gates of Hell, *Hereſies* are meant. In Oppoſition to this it hath been fully ſhew'd, that πυλαι Αδου *The Gates of Hades*, in all Languages, in all ancient Greek, and Jewiſh Authors, and where-ever it is uſed in the old Teſtament, or the Tranſlation of the *Sep-*

Septuagint, is always uſed to ſignify the State of Death, the Place and Receptacle of the Dead; but never uſed to ſignify the Power of *Hereſy*, or *Schiſm*, Sin, or Satan. Now is it here a ſufficient Reply, for them to ſay, they have ſettled the Phraſe to another Senſe? If not; why ſhould it be deem'd ſo, in this preſent Caſe? Hence,

IVthly, It muſt follow: That it is the ſame Thing to ſay, that a Doctrine is inconceivable by, and tranſcends human Underſtanding; and to ſay it is not revealed. For if it be revealed to any Man's Underſtanding, it muſt be intelligible to his Underſtanding, and ſo his Underſtanding muſt be able to perceive the Meaning of the Revelation, and to paſs a Judgment on It. Whereas no Man can paſs a Judgment on what He doth not underſtand, or perceive that which is unintelligible.

Now to conclude; this Doctrine is not a mere Speculation, but is of excellent Uſe, to quiet Men's Conſciences, in Reference to the Doctrines fiercely diſputed in our Age, and propounded as Articles neceſſary to be believ'd, in order to Salvation. For let a Man, after the beſt Search and Enquiry he can make, ask his own Conſcience, whether he hath any certain Notion or Underſtanding, of the true Meaning of the Words, in which the Article is propounded; and if he finds he

can attain to no ſuch Knowledge; let him reſt aſſured, he neither is, nor can he be, obliged to believe it. For tho' Men may Act otherwiſe, a Good and Righteous God can no more require me to believe, what I cannot underſtand, than to do what I cannot do. It is not agreeable to the Goodneſs, or Juſtice of God, ſaith Mr. *Glanvil*, that Mens eternal intereſt ſhould depend upon Things, that are very difficult to be underſtood, and may be eaſily miſtaken. For were it ſo; no Man could be ſecure, but that, do he what he could, he might periſh everlaſtingly, for not believing, or believing amiſs, ſome of thoſe difficult Points, which are ſuppoſed neceſſary to Salvation. And all who are ignorant, and of weak Underſtanding, muſt periſh eternally; or muſt be ſaved by an implicite Faith in unknown Fundamentals, or in they know not what.

Ibid. P. 28.

(2*dly*) When the Doctrine is reduc'd to this Head; *What is the true Senſe of Scripture in the Caſe*? (as all Controverſies, relating to Things required by God to be believed or done, in order to Salvation, ought to be, becauſe that only is our Rule of Faith.) Inquire uprightly, whether the *Scripture* be clear on either Side, and where you find it ſo, determine your Aſſent to that Side. But if upon your Search, you find that probable Reaſons for

for the true Senſe of it, are alleged on both Sides, then reſt aſſured, the Article cannot be neceſſary to be believed to your Salvation. For, as the judicious Mr. *Chillingworth* well argues; 'If God would have his Meaning in thoſe Places certainly known; how could it ſtand with his Wiſdom, to be ſo wanting to his own Will, and End, as to ſpeak obſcurely? Or, how can it ſtand with his Juſtice, to require Men to know with certainty the Meaning of thoſe Words, which He Himſelf hath not clearly, and ſo not certainly delivered? For if God's Will had been, we ſhould have underſtood Him more certainly, He would have ſpoken more plainly. And if by Reaſon of the ſeeming conflict, which ſometimes there is betwixt *Scripture Reaſon*, and *Authority*, of the one Side; and *Scripture Reaſon*, and *Authority*, on the other; if by Reaſon of the Variety of Tempers, Abilities, and Education, by which Men's Underſtandings are variouſly Fram'd; They do embrace ſev'ral Opinions, of which ſome muſt be erroneous; to ſay, that God will damn Them for ſuch Errors, who are Lovers of Him, and Lovers of Truth, is to rob Men of their Comfort, and God of his Goodneſs; to make Man deſperate, and God a Tyrant. *Preface p.* 4. *Chap.* 2 *p.* 78. & *p.* 64.

SERMON II.

JOB xi. 7.

Canſt thou by Searching find out God? Canſt thou find out the Almighty unto Perfection?

THESE Queſtions being in the Language of *Holy-Scripture* vehement Negations, and the firſt Queſtion relating to the Nature, and Perfections of the Deity in general, the Second declaring him to be Al Sheddi, *Almighty*, or as the Word importeth, *All-Sufficient*, i. e. one of ſufficient Power to do all Things, of Underſtanding ſufficient to know all Things,

Things, and of ſufficient Wiſdom in all Things, to diſcern what is beſt and fitteſt to be done; the Reſult of them muſt be this, that it is not in the Power of Man's Wiſdom, by all the Enquiry he can make, or all the Skill he can attain, to advance to a perfect Knowledge of the divine Nature or Perfections; but after all his Induſtry, he will find both Incomprehenſible to the moſt rais'd Underſtanding. For if God be God, He muſt be infinite both in his Nature, and in thoſe Attributes which are not really diſtinguiſhed from it: And if Man be Man, his Underſtanding muſt be limited and Finite, and ſo unable fully to comprehend that which is Infinite, by reaſon of the vaſt Diſproportion that there is betwixt the Object, and his Faculties.

Now becauſe many have very falſe Notions of the Perfections of the Deity; and ſome are apt ſo to exalt one of theſe Attributes, as that it claſheth with, and even contradicts another of them; others deny two or three of theſe Perfections to be revealed; becauſe they are not able to conceive the Manner after which they exiſt, or act: Some, laſtly, ſhelter all the abſurd Opinions, which they have eſpouſed againſt all the Arguments which can be offer'd to confute them, under this Pretence, that God is Incomprehen-

sible, both in his Nature, and his Attributes; and so, say they, we cannot argue against their Sentiments, from any seeming Contradictions which they bear to the Perfections of the Deity: The Rules which I offer in this Case to direct Men's Judgments shall be these.

Rule 1. First, that we ought not to deny, or doubt of any of the divine Perfections, which clearly are revealed in his Word; because we do not know, or are not able to conceive how they can be in God: Or to argue thus concerning them; I am not able to discern how this can be, and therefore ought not to believe it is. For one of the divine Perfections being this, to be Unsearchable and Incomprehensible by finite Understandings, it is an old and a good Rule in Revelations of this Nature, μὴ δεῖν ἐξετάζειν πῶς that *we ought not to enquire* how that can be, which God hath Assur'd us that it is, and much less to deny the Thing, because we do not comprehend the Manner how it is, or acts; and the Reason of this is very plain, because a God of perfect Knowledge cannot be ignorant of what he doth aver, and a God of perfect Truth cannot impose upon us by a Lie. To give some Instances of this Rule;

(1*st*) Let us not doubt of God's Presence every where, because we cannot apprehend

hend how a Spirit can be extended thro' all Places, ſeeing God hath expreſsly told us, that * *He fills Heaven and Earth*: *King Solomon*, that † *the Heaven of Heavens are not able to contain Him*: The *Pſalmiſt*, that we cannot go from his Preſence; for if we climb up into Heaven, He is there, or ſhould we deſcend into Hell, or the Regions of the Dead, *He is there alſo.* Pſal. 139. 7, 8.

* *Jerem.* 23, 24. † 1 *Kings* 8. 37.

(2*dly*,) Doubt not of God's Omniſcience, or his Fore-knowledge of all things, becauſe you cannot apprehend how God ſhould know that certainly will be, which depends on free, and, ſo, uncertain Cauſes. For the ‖ *Scripture* doth plainly inform us, that *known unto God, are all his Works, from the beginning of the World*; that He *knows our Thoughts*, as free as they are, *long before* they are formed in us. And all the Predictions of things future, and dependent on the Will of Man, recorded in the Scripture, and which are come to paſs exactly as they were foretold, are ſo many Demonſtrations of this Truth; and God Himſelf ſays, * *ſhew the things that are to come, that we may know that Ye are Gods.*

‖ *Acts* 15. 18. *Pſal.* 139. 2. * *Iſa.* 41. 23.

(3*dly*,) Doubt not of God's Providence, wiſely diſpoſing and ordering of all Things, both in Heaven and Earth, as many of the *Heathens* did, becauſe they by Experience

found that it happened here oftentimes well to the Wicked, and that the Righteous were oft exposed to the greatest Evils.

Psal. 103. 19. For the † *Scripture* plainly doth inform us that *his Kingdom ruleth over all*, i. e. all Things, all Persons, Actions, and Events; *that all Things are of Him, and from Him*; and that *a Sparrow* falls *not to the Ground without his Providence.*

Rom. 11. 36.

Mat. 10. 29.

To shew the Reasonableness of this Rule; consider, (1) That where God hath not enabled us to know how these Things are, or can be, He doth not require us to believe *the Manner* how they are, or may be. For Instance; He requires us to believe, his Power can raise the Dead; and this is necessary to be believed, that we may live in Expectation of that Glorious Resurrection, which He hath promised to his faithful Servants; but then he hath no where obliged us to believe, how he will do this. He requires us to believe that He is every where present, that we may rest upon Him as *a present Help in Time of need*; but we are not concern'd to know how He is so, or how he can be so. It is necessary that we should believe, that God knows things to come, tho' they be contingent in their own Nature; since otherwise we could not believe his Predictions concerning them; but then He hath not obliged us to believe or know, how He doth this. 'Tis

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neceſſary to believe that God ordereth all Things both in Heaven and Earth, that we may own his Providence in all Events; but then it is not neceſſary that we ſhould know how he doth all theſe Things. The Firſt in all theſe Caſes is therefore neceſſary to be believed, becauſe it clearly is reveal-ed, and ſo is Matter of our Faith; and therefore we may know it is, and muſt be ſo. The Second is not neceſſary to be known, becauſe 'tis only Matter of our Curioſity, nor can it be believed, becauſe 'tis not revealed. So that where our Un-derſtandings are puzzled, and our Know-ledge non pluſs'd, our Faith is not con-cerned.

(2) Obſerve, that where God hath not given us Wiſdom to diſcern, how thoſe things can be, which are the Objects of our Faith; there He hath given us Experience and Judgment, to diſcern they may, or muſt be ſo. For Inſtance, tho' He hath never told us how he will raiſe the Dead, yet he hath given us Experience by raiſing our *Lord Jeſus* from the Dead, and many other Perſons with and by Him, that He can do this. Tho' He hath not given us Underſtandings to comprehend how He is every where, yet hath He given us Ex-perience, by his Works done in all Places, by thoſe Attributes which are not really diſtinguiſh'd from his Eſſence, that He is

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ſo. And tho' He hath not taught us, how his Fore-knowledge of our free Actions, is conſiſtent with the Freedom of our Wills; yet hath He given us Experience, that we have free Wills, or that we freely chuſe to do, what we do, and freely refuſe to do, what we leave undone; and this we teſtify by the Confeſſion of our Sins, and the Convictions of our Conſciences, and by the Blame we lay, and the Puniſhments we inflict on others for their Actions. Moreover, our Judgment is able to diſcern, that Fore-knowledge can neither make, nor change its Subject, but ſees it truly as it is; and ſo it muſt either ſee, that Man lies under an abſolute Neceſſity of Acting as he doth, and then there can neither be Place for Vice or Virtue, Rewards or Puniſhments, Religion or Irreligion: Or he muſt ſee that Action to be freely future, which indeed is ſo. To clear up this by a plain Inſtance: When Chriſt revealed to his Diſciples that *Judas* ſhould betray Him; they muſt have a Fore-knowledge that he would do ſo, as certain and infallible as that of God's, and yet it is as certain that their Fore-knowledge that he would do ſo; had no influence on his doing ſo; and from thoſe Words of Chriſt, *Matt.* 26. 24. *The Son of Man goeth as it is written of Him, but wo to that Man by whom He is betray'd, it had been good for Him*

Him that he had not been born; it clearly follows that this Prediction, and ſo the Preſcience of this Event, that *Jeſus* ſhould be thus betrayed by *Judas*, did neither lay on *Judas*, or imply any Neceſſity laid on him, of doing that Action; becauſe it did not leſſen the Wo pronounc'd on him, for the doing it. God therefore gives us ſufficient Ground of Faith in thoſe Particulars, in which he is not pleaſed to ſatisfy our Curioſity, becauſe that is needleſs; but the other is neceſſary.

Rule 2. My ſecond Rule is this, that we ought to put a difference as to our Knowledge of, and our Deductions from God's inimitable Perfections, which are pure Objects of our Faith; *viz.* his Eternity, his Omnipreſence, his Knowledge of Things future and contingent, and his moral, and communicable Perfections, which relate to our Practice; of the firſt we neither have nor can have a juſt Notion; becauſe they being only in God, there is nothing occuring to our Senſes, or our Apprehenſions, whence all our Knowledge hath its Riſe, to which we can compare them; and ſo our certain Inferences from them, can be only ſuch as *Scripture* hath afforded to our Hands. But then as to God's Imitable Perfections, his Truth and Faithfulneſs, his Love, Goodneſs, and Sincerity, they are the Foundations of our Faith and Hope, of our

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Dependence on him, and our Expectations of good Things from him; and ſo without a juſt Idea of theſe things, (tho' it be ſtill imperfect, as all our preſent Knowledge is) theſe Duties could not be our reaſonable Service; and if we could not underſtand theſe Things, the whole Bible would be inſignificant to us. For all Revelation from God depends upon his Veracity, and ſuppoſeth, that we know what is meant by his Sincerity and Truth, his Goodneſs, and his Juſtice; and therefore no Man can duly entertain any Notions which plainly contradict theſe Attributes. And to pretend that we cannot know what Goodneſs, Truth, and Juſtice in God are, is, in effect to ſay, it is all one to us, whether God be Good, True, and Juſt, or not. Nor could we imitate Him in theſe Perfections; for he that imitates, endeavours to make himſelf like to ſomething that he knows, and muſt of neceſſity have a true Idea of that, which he aims to be like. So that if we had no certain Notion of the Juſtice, Truth, and Goodneſs of God, He would be as to theſe Things, an unintelligible Being to us; and Religion, which conſiſts chiefly in Imitation of his communicable Attributes, would be a Thing impoſſible. In a Word, the moſt natural Notion that all Men have of God, is this, that

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He is Juſt and Good; and to ſay God is Juſt and Good, but not Good and Juſt as Men underſtand Goodneſs and Juſtice, is to ſay that we have no natural Notion of God. For if the natural Notion of a God be this, that He is Juſt and Good, it ſeems incongruous to think, that we ſhould have the Notion of a Juſt and Good God, without having any natural Notion of what his Goodneſs and Juſtice are. Now hence this Corollary will ariſe, that tho' we cannot argue concerning God's incommunicable Attributes thus, I have no Notion of an Eternity with, or without a Succeſſion; I have no Idea of God wholly every where without Multiplication; I am not able to Conceive how He can certainly know the Effect, where the Cauſe is uncertain, and free to produce the contrary; and ſo cannot believe God's Eternity, his Omnipreſence, or his Preſcience; this being an Argument *ab ignoto ad ignotius*: Yet we may argue againſt the abſolute Decrees of Reprobation, and of denying Grace ſufficient for the Performance of our Duty, from the Conſiderations of Divine Juſtice, his Truth and Sincerity, his Love and Goodneſs to the Sons of Men.

Rule III. A third Rule neceſſary to be obſerv'd, that we may judge aright of the divine Perfections, is to conſider them in

in Conjunction, and ſo that they may be all conſiſtent one with another; it being certain, that nothing can be a Perfection in God, which plainly thwarts any other of his Attributes, they being all immediate Emanations from the ſame ſimple and invariable Eſſence. When then we frame to our ſelves, ſuch Notions of one of his Attributes, as thwart the Nature and neceſſary Operations of the other, we frame an Idol of our own, inſtead of a divine Perfection. For Inſtance; a God of abſolute Sovereignty, who by Virtue of his Prerogative over his Creatures, can paſs an Act of Reprobation on the Generality of Mankind, when he had equal Reaſon to make them, as well as any others, Veſſels of Election, they being equally his Offspring, equally the Sons of *Adam*, and equally in want of the divine Grace and Favour, is a Predeſtinarian Idol, God being incapable of exerciſing any ſuch Sovereignty over his Creatures, which is repugnant to his rich Grace, Goodneſs, Love, Mercy, and Compaſſion to the Souls, that He hath made, and therefore incapable of leaving the greateſt Part of them inevitably obnoxious to eternal Ruine. When He had by the Sufferings of his own Son, provided a Remedy ſufficient to prevent it, did He not Arbitrarily exclude them from

from it? When under the Roman Government, the Father had an abſolute Power over his Children; and in the Eaſtern Nations, the Prince had abſolute Power over his Subjects; would this Sovereignty excuſe them, for a Severity and Rigour unworthy of a Father or a Sovereign, in leaving moſt of their Children, and their Subjects, under the extreameſt Miſery, when by the very ſame Means, that a few of them have been reſcu'd from it, they might all of them have been ſo. And ſhall we then impute that Rigour, want of natural Affection and Compaſſion, to the Lover of Souls, and the benign Government of our Heavenly Father, which we muſt condemn and abhor in earthly Governours, and in Fathers of our Fleſh?

(2) A God of all Mercy, or who is merciful to them that offend of malicious Wickedneſs, and go on ſtill, and even die in their Sins, upon Preſumption of his Mercy, is an Idol fram'd in the Sinner's Brain; becauſe it is the Apprehenſion of a God, that wants that Holineſs, which makes it neceſſary for Him to hate Iniquity, and that Juſtice, which will not ſuffer Him to clear the Guilty, or that Truth, which doth engage Him to execute his Threats upon the Wicked and Impenitent; whereas in Truth, there neither is, nor

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be ſuch a God. Again, a God of abſolute and unnconfin'd Goodneſs, who will be always doing Good to Men, however they deport themſelves towards Him, is an Idol, ſeeing there neither is, nor can be ſuch a God, whoſe Juſtice, Holineſs, and Truth do not oblige Him to puniſh inſolent Impiety and Wickedneſs. We therefore only are to look upon Him as a God, who hath the Mercy of a Righteous Governour, who hath declared he will deal with Men, according to the Tenor of his Laws, and will diſcountenance the willful Violations of them; and as a God, that is only Good and Merciful, as far as it is conſiſtent with that Holineſs and hatred of Iniquity, and with that Juſtice, which is eſſential to Him, ſo to be. And were this well conſider'd, Men would not be ſo preſumptuous, as to encourage themſelves in Sin, by fancying to themſelves, a God made up of Mercy and of Goodneſs; ſeeing it is not ſuitable to the Divine Goodneſs and Mercy, finally to bear with, and forgive obſtinate Offenders, this being inconſiſtent with his Truth, Holineſs and Juſtice, and with the Wiſdom of his Government.

On the other Hand, we are not meerly to conſider Him, as a God of Juſtice and Severity, but only as a God of Juſtice temper'd with Mercy, and freely tendring

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it to those, who by sincere Repentance, qualify themselves to be the Objects of that Mercy, and waiting to be Gracious to all that truly turn to Him, and only exercising the Severity of his Justice upon those who have despised that Goodness, Patience, and Long-suffering, which was design'd to lead them to Repentance. And were this well consider'd, Men would not, by the Apprehensions of God's Justice, be cast into Despair. For God is not so severe, but that He hath still a Reserve of Mercy to the Penitent, and an Arm open to receive returning Prodigals; provided they return from their Iniquity, whilst they have Health and Vigour with Pleasure to pursue it; and not then only, when grim Death affrights them into some sudden Resolutions; or when they are so enfeebled by their former Lusts, as that they cannot seek it yet again.

Rule IV. My fourth and last Rule is this; Entertain no Opinions of God, or of his Attributes, which contradict the natural Principles of Religion, or the Necessity of a good Life, or countenance Men in their Impenitency and evil Courses, what Arguments soever may be offer'd for them. For as for the natural Duties, we owe to God and our Neighbour, they are all prescrib'd by the Light of Nature,

and writ upon the Tables of our Heart; and ſo tho' Divine Revelations may emprove, and tender better Motives and freſh Engagements to perform them, they cannot contradict them; ſeeing by doing ſo, they would be contrary to thoſe very Principles God hath implanted in our Nature, and therefore could not reaſonably be receiv'd as divine Revelations. Moreover, nothing is more evident, than that an Holy God can reveal nothing, that tends to the Encouragement of Men in Sin, or the Neglect of Holineſs, or of Obedience to his Laws; for his Goſpel is the Knowledge of that Truth, which is after Godlineſs, *Tit.* i. 2. That Grace of God, which has appear'd to teach us denying all Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, to live ſoberly, godly, and righteouſly, and to have our Fruit unto Holineſs, that the End may be eternal Life. As therefore *Zeno's* Argument, that there could be no Motion, was preſently rejected, as contrary to the Experience of all Men that could walk, and as being attended with this abſurd and evil Conſequence, that all Men muſt ſtand ſtill: So in like manner, are we to reject the Doctrines of thoſe Men, who teach that all Men are purely paſſive, in the whole Work of their Regeneration, and can do nothing towards their own Converſion, becauſe

the Scriptures repreſent the *Heathen* World, as *dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins*; and dead Men cannot act; and that natural Men have no free Will to chuſe any thing that is Good, becauſe our *Saviour* ſaith, *a corrupt Tree cannot bring forth good Fruit*; ſince they, from theſe miſtaken *Metaphors*, and Scriptures falſely applied, advance Opinions, which are abſurd in Practice, and pernicious in their Conſequences. For the natural Conſequence of Men's Inability to do any thing towards their Converſion, is this, That ſuch Men muſt do nothing at all in Religion, neither think of God's Promiſes or Threats, nor pray to God, nor read, nor hear his Word. For dead Men cannot pray, nor read, or hear, or be moved by Promiſes or Threats, but muſt lie ſtill, till the Life-giving Operation deſcends from Heaven upon them; and ſo the Devil muſt be needleſsly employed, in coming to take *away the Word out of theſe Men's Hearts, leſt they ſhould believe*, and be ſaved; ſeeing that Word could have no Influence upon Men to Salvation, when it was not attended with God's unfruſtrable Aſſiſtance; and where it was ſo, all his Attempts to fruſtrate the believing of it to Salvation, muſt be vain. Yea hence it follows, that God doth in vain, and (with Reverence

be it ſpoken) unreaſonably, and abſurdly call upon theſe Men, to conſider of, and lay to Heart his Promiſes and Threats, Judgments and Mercies, and more unreaſonably ſay unto them, *Turn ye, Turn ye from your evil Ways, why will ye die? Turn your ſelves and live*, Ezek. xviii. 31, 32. And the plain Conſequence of the Incapacity of natural Men to chuſe any thing that is Good, is the ſame. For if they can chuſe nothing that is Good, they muſt either not be oblig'd to chuſe any thing at all, or to chuſe what is Evil; and if they be not able to comply with any of God's Motives, Perſwaſions or Sollicitations, to chuſe the Good, and refuſe the Evil, they muſt be offer'd to them in vain; nor could God reaſonably complain, as very oft he doth, of ſuch Men, that *they would not chuſe the Fear of the Lord*, or threaten the ſevereſt Judgment on them for not doing ſo; nor had our Lord any juſt Reaſon to complain of the *Jews*, that *they would not be gathered*, or come upon his Invitation to the Wedding-Feaſt, or come unto him that they might be ſaved, if they could not even will to do ſo. Nor do theſe Men conſider, that He, who ſaid to the *Jews*, *a corrupt Tree cannot bring forth good Fruit*, commanded the ſame Perſons, *to make the Tree good, that the Fruit might*

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be good alſo, Matt. xii. 33. And tho' Men may imagin, that they advance the Glory of divine Grace, by diveſting Man of all Power to do any thing, yet as it cannot be for the Glory of his Grace, to leave the greateſt Part of the World in a perfect Incapacity, of doing any thing, which may obtain his Favour; ſo it is eaſy to diſcern, the Falſehood of this Doctrine, becauſe it contradicts the Practice of Religion, and takes off Men's Obligations to perform Religious Duties; for what Men cannot do, they cannot be obliged to do; and renders all God's Commands and Exhortations to theſe Men vain; for that Command muſt be given in vain, which cannot be obey'd; it diſcourages all Endeavours of Reformation and Amendment, and renders Men ſlothful and regardleſs of working out their own Salvation; for he that can do nothing that is good, can do nothing that conduceth to it.

Hence alſo we may be aſſur'd of the Falſehood of that Doctrine, which affirms, that Chriſt died only for the Elect; becauſe that Doctrine is viſibly deſtructive of almoſt all the Acts of Piety and Virtue.

For (*1ſt*) Prayer is the great and general Duty of all *Chriſtians*, who are oblig'd to make Prayers and Supplications for all

Men; and theſe Prayers muſt be offered up in Faith, in the Name of *Chriſt* imploring all Spiritual Bleſſings for his Sake, and thro' his meritorious Paſſion. Which how can we do ſeriouſly, and in Faith, if we may reaſonably queſtion, whether *Chriſt's* Merits do Reſpect us, or are available in our behalf? How can we do this for all Men, provided God himſelf hath taught us, that his Son never died, nor did he ever intend his Paſſion, for the Benefit of all, but only for the Good of his Elect? Surely, he can apply himſelf but faintly to God, for the Bleſſings of a Saviour and Redeemer, who is thus taught to doubt, whether he hath any *Saviour*, or not.

(2.) It is the Duty of all *Chriſtians* to give Thanks to God, always, for all things, in the Name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. We muſt do this, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, for all Men; and therefore that Opinion, which obſtructs this Gratitude, deprives God of his Praiſe, and ſtops our Mouths, ſo that we cannot open them in Thankſgivings to Him, muſt be repugnant both to *Scripture* and to Reaſon. Now ſurely, the greateſt Part of Mankind cannot be oblig'd to bleſs God for his Love to them in ſending his beloved Son into the World, if He were never ſent with a Deſign of doing good to them; or to give Thanks

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to the *Lord Jeſus* for his redeeming Love, who never were redeemed by Him. They cannot heartily Reſent the Kindneſs of their God and Saviour, who know not that this Kindneſs doth at all concern them, or that He ever was deſign'd to be their Saviour. So that either Chriſt is the Saviour of all Men, or the greateſt Part of Chriſtians are diſoblig'd, and even incapacitated to praiſe Him, for any thing which He hath done and ſuffered for them.

(3) The greateſt Duty both of *Jew* and *Gentile*, is to love the Lord, with all their Hearts. This is moſt certainly a Precept obliging all Mankind. Now if God hath been ſo kindly affected towards all Men, and ſo careful of their Welfare, as to provide a *Saviour* for them, and ſend his own beloved Son into the World to die, that they might live thro' Him; all Men muſt be obliged to love Him as their gracious Friend and Benefactor. But if He intended no ſuch Kindneſs to the greateſt Part of Men, what Motive can they have to love Him, who never had any Love to their Souls, never deſign'd them any Deliverance from the Wrath to come?

(4) The Holy *Scripture* doth require us to fear the Lord and his Goodneſs, and to perform our Duty, from a Senſe of the great Kindneſs He hath ſhewed to us;

and if God firſt loved us thus, ſurely we all ſtand bound to ſhew our Love to Him again, by that ſincere Obedience which is the trueſt Evidence of our ſincere Affection; if *Chriſt* hath bought us with the Price of his moſt precious Blood, we ought to live to Him who died for us, and to glorify Him with our Souls and Bodies, which are his; (but altho' he muſt have a ſlaviſh Dread of God, who can expect no Mercy, he cannot be poſſeſs'd with an ingenuous Fear of forfeiting his Favour) how can he be moved to ſerve God, from the Conſideration of his Benefits, for whom they never were intended? 'Tis partly the Senſe of thoſe Bleſſings which we have received, and partly the Aſſurances of thoſe Advantages we ſhall receive by ſerving Him, which are the moſt prevailing Motives to the Performance of our Duty; if then God never intended any Spiritual Benefit, by the Death of his Son, to the greateſt Part of Mankind; if they have no Beloved thro' whom their Perſons or Performances can find Acceptance; if thro' the want of this, they are incapable of Salvation, or of Deliverance from the Wrath to come; muſt they not be entirely deprived of all prevailing Motives to the Service of this God and Saviour.

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To conclude, Hence we have Reaſon to ſuſpect the Validity of a Death-Bed Repentance to Salvation. For if a Sorrow for our Sins, when we can live no longer to commit them, be ſufficient to procure Pardon and Salvation, then cannot Holineſs of Life be neceſſary to that End; ſince that cannot be neceſſary in Order to an End, without which we may certainly obtain that End. This alſo plainly ſeems to make Chriſt the Miniſter of Sin, as coming to proclaim Pardon and Salvation to them, who in defiance of his Holy Laws, and all the Methods of his Grace, have ſpent their whole Lives in Acts of wilful Diſobedience to his Precepts, provided they at laſt be ſorry for their ſo doing. Let us then live a Life of Righteouſneſs, if we deſire to die the Death of the Righteous, and have our Fruit unto Holineſs, that the End may be Eternal Life: Which God of His Mercy Grant.

SERMON III.

SERMON III.

2 Corinthians iii. *ver.* 12, 13.

We uſe great Plainneſs of Speech, and do not, as Moſes, *put a Veil before our Face.*

SAINT *PAUL* declareth *ver.* 5. of this Chapter concerning himſelf, and all the reſt of the *Apoſtles*, that they were not ſufficient of themſelves λογίζεσθαι, *to reaſon* ſo as to convert the *Jews* and *Gentiles* to the *Chriſtian Faith*, by the Strength of rational Demonſtration; but their Sufficiency for this Work was entirely owing to that God who had *made them able*

able Miniſters of the New Teſtament, by giving them the Aſſiſtance of his *Holy Spirit*, and ſo enabling them to *preach the Goſpel, not in the Words of Man's Wiſdom, but in Demonſtration of the Spirit, and in Power.* Seeing then, ſaith He, we have this Hope of the Divine Aſſiſtance in our Office, we uſe πολλὴν παῤῥησίαν, *much Plainneſs of Speech* in the preaching of it. So the Word παῤῥησία here is duly rendred; for tho' it ſometimes ſignifies Freedom or Boldneſs of Speech, yet when it is put in Oppoſition to ſpeaking covertly, or obſcurely, it always doth, and muſt in Reaſon ſignify Speaking plainly, or in Words eaſie to be underſtood: So it is rendred when the *Jews* ſay to *Chriſt*, how long doſt thou keep us in Suſpenſe, *if thou be the Chriſt tell us* παῤῥησία *plainly*, Joh. x. 24. So when *Chriſt* ſaid to his Diſciples, *Our Friend Lazarus ſleepeth*; becauſe theſe Words were capable of a double Senſe, and ſo were underſtood by them, of *taking Reſt by Sleep*, He ſaith unto them παῤῥησία, plainly, *Lazarus is dead*, John xi. 14. In this Senſe alſo doth he ſay to his Diſciples, *Hitherto have I ſpoken to you in Parables*; that is, ſo obſcurely, that you came often to me to explain my Words: *Hereafter I will ſhew you* παῤῥησία *plainly* the Will *of the Father*, *i. e.* I will enable you by the

the Assistance of the *Holy Spirit*, which I will send unto you from the Father, to declare his Will plainly.

And when He had said unto them, *I came forth from the Father*, and *came into the World*; and *again I leave the World, and go to the Father*; they, understanding the Meaning of those Words, say, *now speakest thou παῤῥησίᾳ plainly*, and *speakest no Parable*; seeing then the Plainness here mentioned by St *Paul*, is opposed to the *Veil put on the Face of Moses*, or to those Types and Shadows, which so obscured the Law of *Moses* to the *Jews*, that they perceived not the Things that were typified by it, nor were able to *look to the End*, or the Accomplishment of *them*; the Plainness here opposed to it, must signifie the Plainness of that *Gospel* which the *Apostles* writ, and preached; and since they used this Plainness of Speech in some Things not necessary to that End, they must have greater Reason to use it in Things *necessary to be believ'd or done unto Salvation*. And if they did this in some Things necessary to Salvation, as certainly they did; the same Reason must induce them to do it in all Things necessary to that End, since the Salvation of Christians could not be obtain'd by doing it only in some Things necessary to that End, with the

the Neglect of other Things as neceſſary. Whence I infer, *That the Scriptures of the New Teſtament are written with ſufficient Clearneſs, and Perſpicuity in all Things neceſſary to be believed and done by Chriſtians in Order to their Salvation.* This Doctrine is the true Foundation of all that properly is called *Religion*, to wit, *Faith in God*, and *Obedience to his Will* made known to us. For Divine Faith being an Aſſent to God's Teſtimony, muſt be entirely contain'd in the *Word of God*, and all Obedience to his Holy Will doth preſuppoſe the making that Will known to us, that is, the *Revelation* of it. This, at the Beginning of the *Reformation*, was the Doctrine of all *Proteſtants*, as appears from the *Harmony* of their *Confeſſions*, but it was more peculiarly the Doctrine which the *Church of England* thought ſo important, that She required all her *Biſhops* and *Prieſts* to profeſs, and to ſubſcribe it, and all her Members to believe it. For,

1*ſt.* She requires all her *Clergy*, before their Ordination, to ſubſcribe to her *6th Article*, which ſaith that *The Scripture containeth all Things neceſſary to Salvation; ſo that whatſoever is not read therein, nor can be proved thereby, is not to be required of any Man, that it ſhould be believed as an Article of Faith, or be thought requiſite or neceſſary*

neceſſary to Salvation: To her 20*th Article*, which declares that *Tho' the Church be a Witneſs, and Keeper of holy Writ, yet ought it not to decree any Thing againſt the ſame, or inforce any thing beſides the ſame to be believed for Neceſſity of Salvation:* And to Her 21*ſt Article* which adds, *That things ordained by General Councils, as neceſſary to Salvation, have neither Strength, nor Authority, unleſs they can be proved from the Scriptures.*

2*dly.* In Her Form for Ordination of *Biſhops* and *Prieſts*, She requires them to profeſs, *they are perſwaded that the Holy Scriptures contain ſufficiently all Doctrine required of Neceſſity for eternal Salvation through Faith in Chriſt; and that they are determined, out of the ſame Scriptures, to teach the People committed to their Charge, and to teach nothing, as required of Neceſſity to Salvation, but that which they ſhall be perſwaded may be contained* in, *and proved* by *the Scriptures.*

3*dly.* In Her Office for the 17*th* of *November*, She requires all Her Members to make eſpecial Profeſſion of this one *Article: That Chriſt hath ſo abundantly taught us all Religion, and Works, in the written Word, that we need not believe, or do any Thing but only that which is there taught us.* In Her firſt *Homily* on this Subject, She teacheth

teacheth all Her Children, *That in the Holy Scriptures, is fully contained what we ought to do, and what to eſchew; what to believe, and love, and what to expect at God's Hand: That whatſoever is required to the Salvation of Man, is fully contained in the Scriptures of God:* That *from thoſe Books, we may learn to know God's Will and Pleaſure, as much as for this preſent Life is convenient:* That *there is nothing ſpoken in dark Myſteries in one Place, but the ſame Thing is more familiarly, and plainly taught, to the Capacity both of the learned and unlearned, and thoſe Things in the Scriptures which are plain to underſtand, and neceſſary for Salvation, every Man's Duty is to learn them. Homily* the *Second.*

From all which Paſſages it appears that it hath been the conſtant Doctrine of the *Church of England*;

1*ſt*, That *Holy Scripture containeth all Things neceſſary to be believed or done in Order to Salvation.*

2*dly*, That *what is not read there, nor can be proved thence, muſt not by any Council, Church,* or *Perſon, be required as a Doctrine neceſſary to be believed, or a Thing neceſſary to be done for Salvation.*

3dly, That *thoſe Things which are neceſſary to Salvation to be believed or done, are ſo plain in Scripture, that it is every Man's*

Man's Duty to learn them thence; and that we may learn them fully, plentifully, and abundantly from the Scriptures, may prove them by them, and may ſhew that they are taken from the Holy Scriptures; which it is evident we could not do, unleſs they were contain'd in the *Scriptures*, with ſufficient Evidence.

* *Preſervative*, p. 17.

2*dly*, Hence it is evident that * the *excellent Biſhop of Bangor*, truly ſaith, that *it is a Scandal to the Church of* England *to ſuppoſe that it hath any peculiar Doctrines conſidered as the Church of* England : *She having ſo expreſsly declared, that She knows no other Rule but the Goſpel, and always appealing to that for the Truth of every Thing taught by Her, and expreſsly requiring all in Her Communion to take the Scriptures, and not them, for their Rule of Faith, and Practice; and that conſequently the certain Truth of any Doctrine is not put by our reformed Church upon its being the Doctrine or the peculiar Doctrine of our Church, but of the Scriptures.*

3*dly*. That they who do require us to *pray for the Dead*, or to *offer* up to *God the Sacrament*, as being the Traditions of the *Church*, or tell us that the *beſt, and ſafeſt Way for the Interpretation of the Holy Scriptures is to repair to the Primitive Fathers, or the Decrees of General Councils*, are

are not the genuin Members of the *Church of* England, nor do they act agreeably to their *Subscriptions*, or to the *Professions* made by them at their *Ordination*.

In Prosecution of this Subject, I shall endeavour

1*st*, To explain the Sense in which we do assert this Doctrine.

2*dly*, I shall endeavour to confirm the Truth of it from *Scriptures*, and from *Reason*. And,

3*dly*, I shall make some useful Inferences from what hath been delivered.

For the right Explication of it, let it be observed,

1*st*, That we do not say that all *Things necessary to be believed or done, are manifestly contained in all Places of the Scriptures* which may any wise relate to them; but we say with *Irenæus*, and *Origen*, that *those Scriptures which treat of them obscurely, and ambiguously, are either to be interpreted by those*, quæ apertè, & sine ambiguo posita sunt in Scripturis, *which plainly, and without Ambiguity are delivered in the Scriptures*; or *if they cannot be expounded, and made clear, the true Sense of them cannot be necessary to be known*; for if it had been God's Will we should have understood them more certainly, He would have spoken them more plainly, seeing He never

can be wanting in the Means neceſſary on his Part to obtain his Will.

2*dly*, We do not ſay that *Holy Scripture is abſolutely, and in all Things clear*, but willingly acknowledge with *Origen Chryſoſtome*, *Theodoret*, and *St Auſtin*, that there is in Scripture a Mixture of Things obſcure and plain, ſome Things that are δυσνόητα, καὶ δυσερμήνευτα, *hard to be underſtood or be explained*; but our Aſſertion is that of St *Chryſoſtom* and other Fathers, that πάντα ἀναγκαῖα δῆλα, *i. e. all things neceſſary to be believed*, or *done* by all who are concerned to believe and know them, that they may be ſaved, may be learnt thence. And this is evident, becauſe Nothing can be thus neceſſary to be believed, or done, but what is plainly revealed: For to ſay that God hath made it neceſſary to us on Pain of Damnation, to believe and do, what by Reaſon of its Obſcurity we cannot ſurely know to be revealed, or in what Senſe we are to underſtand it, is in Effect to ſay that He requires us, as a Condition of Salvation, certainly to attain that End for which He hath afforded us no certain Means, and that He will damn thoſe who are Lovers of Him, and of his Truth, for ſuch Errors, and Miſtakes as are incident to the beſt of Men; for who is not ſubject to miſtake the Senſe

of

of ſome obſcure Places of the *Holy Scriptures*? or who can clearly know what only is obſcurely ſaid?

3*dly*, When we aſſert the Clearneſs and Sufficiency of *Scripture-Revelations* in all Things neceſſary to be believ'd, and done, we do this only in Oppoſition to the repairing to any *infallible Interpreter*, that we may attain the Knowledge of them, and not in Oppoſition to the Uſe of Reaſon deducing evident Concluſions from *Scripture* Principles, or in Oppoſition to any other Thing which it is our Duty to perform, and which it is in our Power to do, to make the *Scripture* clear unto us in Things neceſſary; and in this Senſe the Truth of this Aſſertion is ſelf-evident. For in Things not neceſſary to be believ'd or done, an *Interpreter* cannot be neceſſary, becauſe we may be ſaved without the Knowledge of them: And in Things clearly deliver'd, He is wholly uſeleſs; for what need can we have of an *Interpreter*, to clear that which is already clearly taught us in *God's Holy Word*?

Now that this Doctrine is fully contain'd in my Text, hath been already proved.

2*dly*, That the *Apoſtles* preached the *Goſpel* with ſufficient Clearneſs in all Things neceſſary to be believed and done,

is evident from the Chapter following, where *v.* 2. it is declared, that *by Manifeſtation of the Truth they did commend themſelves to every Man's Conſcience*; for, ſeeing it is certain that what is only ſaid obſcurely, cannot manifeſt the Truth, or be a Rule for the Direction of every Man's Conſcience, either in Truth or Manners, had not the *Apoſtles* ſpoken the Great Things of the Goſpel plainly, it could not truly have been ſaid, that *they had manifeſted the Truth to every Man's Conſcience*. Moreover the *Apoſtle* by declaring that he who at the firſt Creation cauſed Light to ſhine out of Darkneſs, hath by the *Revelation* of his *Goſpel ſhined into the Hearts of Chriſtians*, ſo as to *give them the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Perſon of Chriſt*, and thence concluding, that if *their Goſpel was hid* from any to whom it was preached, *it was only hid from them whoſe Minds Satan, the God of this World had blinded, leaſt the Light of the glorious Goſpel ſhould ſhine in upon them*; doth plainly teach that the *Goſpel* was not hid from any one for Want of Clearneſs in them that preached it, but only by Reaſon of that Blindneſs which *Satan* had wrought in them that heard it.

To this *Eſtius* replies, that the *Apoſtle* here ſpeaks not of the *Goſpel* to be read, or underſtood

underſtood by us, but of the *Goſpel* preached by him.

To this I anſwer, that the *Goſpel* writ to, and read by them, muſt certainly be the ſame Goſpel which they preached, ſince the *Apoſtle* pronounces an *Anathema* on them who taught any other Doctrine: And as the Reading of the Law of *Moſes* is ſtiled the preaching *Moſes every Sabbath*, Acts xv. 21. ſo is the publick Reading of the *Scriptures* of the *New Teſtament*, the preaching *Chriſt*, and his *Goſpel*: What Reaſon then can be aſſigned why they who confeſſedly preached the *Goſpel* plainly, ſhould write the ſame Things obſcurely to the ſame Perſons, eſpecially, if we conſider that they did τὰ αὐτὰ γεάφειν, *write the ſame Things* to them *becauſe it was ſafe*, Phil. iii. 15. *to put them in Remembrance of thoſe Things which they knew, and in which they were eſtabliſhed* by their Preaching, 2 *Pet.* i. 13. And to *ſtir up their pure Minds by Way of Remembrance, that they might be mindful of the Commands of the Apoſtles of our Lord*, Chap. iii. 1, 2. and that by *Reading they might underſtand their Knowledge in the Myſteries of Chriſt.* Epheſ. iii. 4. For were theſe Ends beſt proſecuted, or to be obtain'd, by writing that obſcurely, which they had plainly preached to them? Moreover, *what*

Things were written aforetime, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, *were written for our Learning*, Rom. xv. 4. and then ſurely they who writ after by the ſame Spirit, did it to the ſame End, that they to whom they ſent their Writings, might *be wiſe* to *that which is good*, Rom. xvi. 19. *that they might underſtand what the Will of the Lord is*, Eph. v. 17. and might *Know what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect Will of God*, Rom. xii. 2. And if they writ for our Learning, and Inſtruction in theſe Things, is it not highly reaſonable to judge they writ plainly of them? Since otherwiſe they writ not to inſtruct and teach, but to confound the Readers. And ſeeing the great End of Writing the Scriptures of the *New Teſtament*, which were not *Prophetical*, was to inſtruct *Chriſtians* in the Will and Mind of God, either we muſt ſay that both the Writers of the *Scriptures*, and that *Good Spirit* who inſpired them, were defective in Skill, or in Care, ſo to write as to obtain that End, or that their Writings are an effectual Means to obtain it, which yet they cannot be, unleſs they are plain in all Things neceſſary to be believed or done in order to Salvation.

In fine, every wiſe Agent purſues his End by the moſt proper and effectual Means.

Means. Now to write plainly, and not obſcurely, is the moſt proper Means to Inſtruct Men by writing; and ſo the *Apoſtles* muſt have uſed this Means of Inſtructing in their Writings, or elſe they cannot be eſteem'd wiſe Agents.

3*dly*, This Doctrine ſeems to be written with a Sun-beam, 1 *Cor.* xiv. where to the Preachers in the *Church* of *Corinth*, delighting to ſpeak in Tongues unknown in the Aſſemblies of their fellow *Chriſtians*, St. *Paul* ſpeaks thus for their Correction, and Reproof, that in this they *acted like Barbarians, and as Children in Underſtanding*; that they *ſpoke unto the Air*; that they tranſgreſſed the Great Rule which they ought always to obſerve in Speaking, to wit, *the doing it to the Edification of the Hearers*; that unleſs they uttered by the Tongue εὐσημον λόγον, *Words eaſy to be underſtood*, their Hearers could not *know what was ſpoken*, that he himſelf, unleſs he *ſpake by Knowledge*, or *by Revelation* to them, *could not profit them*, and that therefore *in the Church he had rather ſpeak five Words with his Underſtanding ſo* employ'd *that by his Voice He might teach others, than ten thouſand Words in an unknown Tongue*. Now is it reaſonable to conceive, that, after theſe Things ſaid for the Reproof of others, he himſelf in

writing to the *Churches* ſhould be guilty of the ſame Fault? That he ſhould *ſpeak unto the Air*, and ſo as *not to profit*, becauſe *his Trumpet gave an uncertain Sound?* That he, in his *Epiſtles*, ſhould neglect to *write Things eaſie to be underſtood*, and by which He might *teach the Church*; and ſo be a Barbarian to thoſe that read them? and yet, if what he deliver'd in thoſe *Epiſtles* concerning Matters neceſſary to be believed and done, were not endited by the *Holy Spirit*, and by him deliver'd with ſufficient Clearneſs; both he himſelf, and that good *Spirit* which enabled him to write them, muſt be guilty of that very Crime which they ſo ſharply had condemn'd?

4*thly*, The contrary Doctrine caſts a vile Reproach upon the *Holy Scriptures*, and upon the ſacred Perſons concern'd in Speaking or Enditing of the Things contain'd in them. For the very Foundation of the Neceſſity of repairing to the *Primitive Fathers*, the *Decrees* of *Councils*, or the *Traditions of the Church*; and the true Reaſon why we are ſent to them, as the beſt Means whereby to know the Senſe of *Holy Scriptures*, even in the chiefeſt Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, is, and can be only this, that they are ſo obſcurely contain'd in *Scripture*, that, without recourſe

courſe to theſe Means, we cannot be ſufficiently inſtructed in the Knowledge of them; for if the *Scriptures* have deliver'd theſe Doctrines with ſufficient Clearneſs, why are we ſent from them to *Fathers*, *Councils*, and *Traditions*, to learn what we may know from *Scripture* with ſufficient Clearneſs and Perſpicuity without recourſe unto them; and

1*ſt*, This Doctrine caſts a vile Imputation upon that Spirit of Wiſdom, by which the *Scriptures* were endited. For the *Holy Spirit* was given to the *Apoſtles*, to *lead them into all Truth*, Joh. xvi. 13. to *teach them all Things*, and to *bring to their remembrance all Things which Chriſt had ſaid unto them*, Joh, xiv. 26. and to make them *able Miniſters of the New Teſtament*, 2 Cor. iii. 6. whence they are ſaid to have preached the Goſpel by *the Aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt ſent down from Heaven*, 1 Pet. i. 12. Now if he did *bring to their Remembrance all Things, which Chriſt had ſaid unto them*, and *led them into all* that *Truth* which they were to deliver, and taught them *all Things* He *had commanded them* to teach to others; either He taught them theſe Things ſo clearly, that they might fully know and teach them; or He did not ſo: If he did ſo, He clearly did inſtruct them in all Truth

Truth neceſſary to be known by Chriſtians, then did he *ſhew them plainly the Will of the Father*, as Chriſt promiſed he ſhould do, *Joh.* xvi. 28. and make them *able Miniſters of the New Teſtament*. If He deliver'd his Mind to the ſacred Pen-Men ſo obſcurely, that they who were concern'd to know and do it, as much as they are concern'd to be ſaved, cannot know his Mind in Things neceſſary to be deliver'd or done for their Salvation, by reading what He enabled them to write, without Recourſe to ſome of theſe *Interpreters*; He muſt have endited the *Scriptures* ſo as no wiſe Perſon ever writ any Thing of the like Moment or Importance. For did ever any wiſe Perſon write obſcurely to them whom He intended to inſtruct in Things moſt needful to be known by them? Doth any good practical Diſcourſe need an Interpreter? Do we not condemn all Obſcurity in writing about Things of this Importance? And ſhall we lay that to the Charge of the good *Spirit of Wiſdom*, which we condemn in others as the greateſt Folly?

2*dly*, This Pretence tends highly to the Diſparagement of thoſe *Apoſtles*, and *Evangeliſts* from whom we have receiv'd the *Scriptures* as a Rule of Faith. For our *Lord* ſaith of his Diſciples, *Ye are the Light of the World*, Matth. v. 13. and *what I tell you in Darkneſs, that ſpeak you in the*

the Light; that is, ſo as to make it manifeſt to them that hear it, it being the Property of Light, *to make Things manifeſt*, Eph. v. 13. and this Light being given them not to be *put under a Buſhel*, but to *ſhine forth before Men*, they therefore did not execute their Office, if they did not ſpeak ſo, that they who heard them might learn, and underſtand what was ſpoken. Again, our Lord ſent them to *preach the Goſpel to every Man*, Mark xvi. 15. and to *teach all Nations to obſerve all Things which he had commanded them*, Matth. xxviii. 19, 20. Now how could they teach Men what they could not clearly perceive to be their Duty? Or to what End did they preach the *Goſpel* to them, if they did not preach it ſo as it might be ſufficiently underſtood by them that heard them? Since the *Apoſtle*'s Enquiry is this, *if you ſpeak not Things eaſie to be underſtood, how ſhall it be known what is ſpoken?* Hence alſo it muſt follow, that the Aſſiſtance which Chriſt gave to his *Apoſtles* to endite this *Rule of Faith*, was leſs than that which He afforded to thoſe *Interpreters* to whom they ſend us; for they who take the Boldneſs to aſſert that the *Scriptures* are ſo obſcure, even in Things neceſſary to be known, as to need their *Interpreters*, dare not aſſert this of thoſe *Interpreters* to whom they

they ſend us. Since this would render theſe *Interpreters* unable to inſtruct us in Things neceſſary without another *Interpreter*, and ſo *in infinitum.*

If then our *Bleſſed Lord* did not ſo aſſiſt his *Apoſtles* in the enditing the ſame Neceſſaries, the Aſſiſtance he gave to them muſt be much more imperfect, than that which he afforded to thoſe *Fathers*, *Councils* and *Patrons of Tradition* to whom they ſend us for the Knowledge of them, and leſs conducing to the End of all his *Revelations*, to wit, the ſaving Knowledge of his Will and Doctrine; ſeeing the *Revelations* made to the ſacred Pen-men of it, according to this Doctrine, muſt need a farther *Revelation* to obtain this End; whereas the *Revelations* made to theſe *Interpreters* do not need it: Moreover this Doctrine reflects upon their Skill in the purſuing the great End of all their Writings; for *they were written*, ſaith *St.* John, *that we might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, and believing might have Life thro' his Name*, John xx. 31. and, ſaith St. *Paul*, *that we might underſtand what the Will of the Lord is*, Eph. v. 17. and be made *wiſe unto Salvation.* Either then theſe Writings were ſufficient for theſe Ends, without Recourſe to theſe *Interpreters*; and then they muſt be written with ſuf-

ſufficient Clearneſs in all Things neceſſary to be believed or done by Chriſtians; or they were not ſufficient for theſe Ends without Recourſe to theſe *Interpreters*, and then 'tis certain that *Chriſt* did not make them *able Miniſters of the New Teſtament.*

3*dly*, This vain Pretence lays a vile Imputation upon our *Great Lawgiver*, the *Author and the Finiſher of our Faith*, declaring in effect that he hath acted ſo as no wiſe *Lawgiver* ever did, or thought fit to do; for do any of them make Laws in Matters neceſſary to be obſerv'd by their Subjects, ſo obſcurely as that they cannot be obey'd till they are interpreted to them by the *Judges*, or clear'd by ſome other Means Do they do this, eſpecially in Matters which concern Life and Death? If it happen at any time that ſome of their Laws be dubious or obſcure in any Matter of Importance, is not this judged an Imperfection in them fit to be remedied by an explanatory Act? Yea doth it not happen either for want of Skill, or Care to make them clearer, neither of which can be ſuppoſed in our *Great Lawgiver?* Shall then that *Jeſus*, who is the *Wiſdom of the Father*, be ſuppoſed to have acted ſo in Matters which concern the everlaſting Salvation of his Subjects, as no wiſe *Law-*

giver

giver ever choſe to do? When our Lord ſpake obſcurely, and in Parables to the *Jews*, He ſaith, he did this as a Puniſhment of their wilful Incredulity, and their Neglect to hearken to his plain Inſtructions, *becauſe they cloſed their Eyes againſt the Light, and made their Ears heavy, leaſt at any time they ſhould ſee with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and underſtand with their Hearts*, Now can we reaſonably conceive, He deals in the ſame manner with them for whom He had the greateſt Kindneſs; his Words plainly declare the contrary: for thus he ſpeaks to his *Diſciples*, *To you it is given to know the Myſteries of God, but to them that are without all Things are done in Parables*; and he gives Thanks to the Father, that *having hid theſe Things from the Wiſe and Prudent, He had revealed them to Babes.* In fine, this Pretence robs Chriſt of his Prerogative of being our *Lawgiver*; for ſeeing, as St. *Jerom* doth obſerve, *The Law is contained not in the Words, but in the Senſe* and *Meaning of it*, if we muſt repair to theſe *Interpreters* to know the Senſe of Chriſt's Words, we muſt from them, and not from Chriſt, learn the Senſe of his Laws; and if not Chriſt, but theſe *Interpreters*, give us the Senſe of his Laws, they, and not Chriſt, are our *Lawgivers.*

In Galat. Ch. Rom. Fol. 70. F.

Our

Our Lord in oppoſition to this vain Pretence, requires us to own no *Guide*, or *Teachers* upon *Earth*, becauſe theſe Titles and Prerogatives belong to him alone. And thus having ſufficiently confirm'd the Truth of this Fundamental Article of the *Proteſtant*, and indeed of all *Religion*, I proceed to ſome Uſes and Improvements of what hath been deliver'd.

And (1*ſt*,) Are all Things neceſſary to be believ'd and done, plainlyd eliver'd in the *Scriptures*, then let every honeſt and ſincere Perſon truly deſirous to know and do what is requiſite to his Salvation, enquire,

1*ſt*, Whether what is impoſed upon them as a *Neceſſary Article of Faith*, as to the Import of the Words, can be underſtood, or clearly perceiv'd by them; if not, then let them reſt aſſured it is no Article of Faith at all; for Faith being an Act of my Underſtanding, it is a Contradiction to ſay I muſt believe what I cannot underſtand. 2*dly*, Enquire whether this ſuppoſed neceſſary Article of Faith be clearly contain'd in, and is ſufficiently prov'd by *Holy Scripture*; if not, the *Church of England* hath aſſured thee that it is no neceſſary Article of Chriſtian Faith. 3*dly*, Conſider the Diſpute concerning Juſtifying and Saving Faith; and thou wilt find it agreed

agreed by all, that That Faith is Juſtifying and Saving, which produceth in thee Good Works, and that is ἡ χάρις ἡ σωτήριος *the Saving Grace of God*, which *teacheth the denying all Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, to live righteouſly, ſoberly, and godly in this preſent World*; and if thy Faith hath done ſo, thou haſt ſhewed it to be truly Juſtifying, and Saving Faith, *by thy Works.*

2*dly*, Grant this Aſſertion, that *Scripture clearly containeth all that is neceſſary to be believed or done in order to Salvation*, and down falls the whole Bulk of *Popery*; for that, as it differs from the Faith of *Proteſtants*, is wholly built on the ſuppoſed Neceſſity of their *Infallible Interpreters*, and *living Judges* of the Senſe of *Scriptures*, and upon *unwritten Traditions*; now if the *Scripture* be plain in all Things neceſſary to be believed and done by Chriſtians, all theſe *Interpreters* muſt be unneceſſary, and therefore not by God appointed for this End: For all that an *Interpreter* can do, is to make clear the Senſe of *Scripture*, and evident it is that what is written with ſufficient Clearneſs in all Things neceſſary to be known, needs not to be made clear; nor can theſe *Judges* be deem'd neceſſary to declare *unwritten Traditions*, or the obſcure Places of *Scripture*;

ſeeing,

ſeeing, upon this Principle, nothing unwritten can be neceſſary to be declared, becauſe we plainly know, from what is written, all that is neceſſary to be known; nor for interpreting obſcure Places, becauſe nothing obſcure can be neceſſary to be underſtood, provided we know all Things neceſſary to be believed or done for our Salvation. 2*dly*, Grant this, and it is certain that *Proteſtants* are in a ſafe Way for Salvation, as having a ſure Rule containing plainly all Things neceſſary to be believed and done in order to that End, and what is plainly taught them they may learn; for as for all Things neceſſary to be believed, they, ſaith our *Church*, are contain'd in the *Apoſtle's Creed*; for the Child in his *Catechiſm* is taught to ſay that his *Godfathers promiſed in his Name that he ſhould believe all the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith*, and yet 'tis certain that they only ſaid in his Name, when this Creed was rehearſed, *all this I ſtedfaſtly believe*; and when he is bid to *rehearſe theſe Articles*, He only doth rehearſe *this Creed*. It is alſo certain, that for above three hundred Years there was no larger Creed extant in the Chriſtian Church; that into this alone, or one then extant, all Chriſtians were baptized, and were admited as true Members of the Church of Chriſt,

by virtue of this Faith alone; whence it demonſtrably follows, both from the nature of the Thing, and the *Tradition* of thoſe Ages of the *Church*, that in this *Creed* was contain'd all that the *Apoſtles* then deliver'd, and the whole *Catholick Church* then taught, as ſimply neceſſary to be believ'd by all *Chriſtians*; and ſurely it cannot be neceſſary for any *Chriſtian* to have more in his *Creed*, than the *Apoſtles* and the *Chriſtians* of the three firſt Ages had; nor can any good Reaſon be aſſign'd, why any Perſon may not be ſaved now by the ſame Faith which was ſufficient for Salvation in the *Apoſtle*'s Days, and the three firſt *Centuries*.

As for the Things neceſſary to be done for Salvation, they are ſo clearly contain'd in the *Scriptures*, that there is no real Controverſie or Diſpute about them; for who doth not know that we are to *believe God's Word*, to *love*, *to honour*, *and obey him*, to *truſt in him*, to *pray to him* for the Bleſſings that we want, and *praiſe him* for the Bleſſings we receive, to bear patiently his Chaſtiſements, and repent of the Evils we have done againſt him; that we are to *be juſt in all our Dealings*, and to *do to others as we would be dealt with*, to *ſpeak the Truth from our Hearts*, and to be faithful to our Promiſes; that we are to *love*

our

our Neighbour as our ſelves; to put on *Bowels of Compaſſion*, and to be kind to all Men, *forbearing*, and *forgiving one another*, *as God for Chriſt's Sake hath forgiven us*; that we muſt live *righteouſly*, *ſoberly*, *and godly in this preſent World*, and *peaceably with all Men*, and have our *Fruit unto Holineſs*, *that* the *End may be eternal Life*; and *as many as walk according to theſe Rules*, *Peace ſhall be upon them.*

I ſhould now proceed to a particular Confutation of theſe three Opinions which recommend to us the *Primitive Fathers*, the Decrees of *Councils*, or *Tradition*, as the *beſt*, *ſafeſt*, and *the moſt certain*, or the infallible *Interpreters* of the Holy *Scriptures*; but of all theſe Heads I have diſcourſed largely in my Treatiſe of *Traditions*, and in my Diſſertation deſign'd to ſhew that the *Fathers* are no fit *Interpreters* of the Holy *Scriptures*, both already publiſhed; and in my Anſwer to the *Guide of Controverſies*, Part the 2d, Chap. 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, which hath been long ready for the Preſs; and therefore I ſhall only inſiſt at preſent on ſuch general Arguments as confute them all together. And,

1*ſt*, Our Lord hath plainly forbid us to own any *ſuch Authentick Guides*, *Maſters*,

or *Teachers* of our Faith, *by ſaying, Be ye not called Rabbi, for one is your Maſter,* διδάσκαλος *your Teacher*, even *Chriſt*; and *call no Man Father upon Earth, for one is your Father*, even he *that is in Heaven, neither be ye called Guides, for one is your* καθηγητὴς *Guide, even Chriſt*, Matth. xxiii. 8, 4, 10. where obſerve,

1*ſt*, That the Titles of *Rab*, Guide, *Ab*, Father, *Mor*, Maſter, were given by the *Jews* to their wiſe Men, and Teachers of their *Laws*, and their *Traditions*. St. *Paul* gives this Deſcription of theſe *Jewiſh Doctors*, that *they gloried in this, that they knew the Will of God, and approved of the Things that were excellent*; that they confidently affirmed that they were ὁδηγοὶ *Guides to the Blind, and a Light to them that ſate in Darkneſs, the Inſtructers of the Simple*, and διδάσκαλοι *Teachers of Babes* (*a*); now by theſe *Epithets* they challenged to themſelves to be ſuch Teachers as the People ſtood bound to believe in all they taught, not ſwerving from, or doubting of the Truth of what they ſaid. Our *Wiſe Men*, ſaith * *Maimonides*, being *indubitatæ Veritatis*, of *unqueſtionable Truth*

(*a*) *Rom.* ii. 18, 19, 20.

* In Seder Zeraim. apud D. Pocock.

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in all their Sayings. Hence they pronounced thoſe *Jews* accurſed, who believed that *Chriſt* was a true *Prophet*, becauſe they wanted the Knowledge of that Law they taught, and that it was a ſufficient Demonſtration of the Falſehood of his Doctrine, that none of the *Rulers or Phariſees believed on him (a)*. *Joſephus* * informs us, that they who were of the Sect of the *Phariſees* ἕπονται τῇ ἡγεμονίᾳ, *followed their Guides, and thought it neceſſary to receive and to contend for whatever they commanded.* The *Sadducees*, ſaith he *(b)*, held it a Virtue to doubt of, and contend πρὸς τοὺς διδασκάλους τῆς σοφίας, *againſt the Teachers of Wiſdom:* But the *Phariſees* yielded ſuch Honour to *their Ancients or Fathers*, that they durſt not be ſo bold as to gainſay any Thing which they had introduced as fit to be obſerved. Here then we have the διδάσκαλοι, *Teachers of Wiſdom* in expreſs Words; the καθηγηταί, *Guides*, in the Word ἡγεμόνες, of the like Import, the *Fathers* in the Word *Ancients*, and all of them repreſented as Perſons of whoſe Doctrines none ought to doubt.

(a) *John* vii. 48, 49.
* *Antiq. Judaic. l.* 18. *c.* 2. *p.* 617. D. F.
(b) τῆς ἠλικίας προήκουσι. *Joſeph.* ibid.

2*dly*, Hence it is evident, That our Lord did not here forbid theſe Titles becauſe they ſavoured of Vain-glory, Pride, and Affectation, but chiefly becauſe by them they aſſum'd to themſelves that Wiſdom and that Authority which belonged only to *God the Father*, and *his Son Jeſus Chriſt*; as is evident from the Reaſon of the Prohibitions here aſſigned, they being theſe; *Call no Man Father upon* Earth ſo as to yield an abſolute Obedience to their Sayings and Commands, becauſe this Authority is due only to the Commands of your *Heavenly Father*: *Call no Man Guide, or Maſter, or Teacher, or be not ye ſo called, becauſe one is your Guide and Teacher, to wit, Chriſt.*

3*dly*, Hence it is manifeſt, that they who teach that *Fathers, Councils, or the unwritten Traditions of the Church* are the *Authentick* Teachers of the Mind of *God the Father*, and of *Chriſt*; or that any Article of Faith is therefore neceſſary to be believed, becauſe it is taught by them, are guilty of *Sacrilege* and *Idolatry*; becauſe they aſcribe that Office to Men, not commiſſionated by *Chriſt* to reveal his Will, or to act by his Authority, and in his Name, as the *Apoſtles* did, which is peculiar, ſaith *Chriſt*, *to God the Father*, and the *Son*, and therefore cannot be aſcribed to, or be aſſumed by others, with-

without assuming to themselves *Divine Authority*. Hence 'tis observable that though *Christ* said to his *Disciples*, *As my Father sent me, so send I you*, and promised the *Holy Ghost to lead them into all Truth*: Yet seeing they delivered what they said by his Assistance and in Obedience to his Command, and acted in his Name, and by his Authority, they only stile themselves the *Ministers*, the *Servants*, the *Ambassadors of Christ*, *and our Servants for his sake*; and whosoever doth challenge the same Authority they had to deliver to us the Mind and Commandments of Christ, must either prove their Commission as the *Apostles* did, by the like Gifts and Miracles imparted to them, or be rejected as false, and sacrilegious Pretenders to that Office.

They also must be highly guilty in this Kind, who tho' they own that *Christ alone is their Law-giver*, and do in Words allow, that the *Scripture is a perfect Rule of Faith*, yet confidently do assert that the *best*, the *safest*, *and the most* reasonable *Method for the obtaining the true* Sense *of the Scriptures*, *is to have Recourse to the Primitive Fathers*, *and from them to learn the true Sense of the Scriptures*; for seeing it is necessary for the obtaining the true Sense of *Scripture*, to use the *best*, the *safest*, and the *wisest*

Way in order to that End, if that be a Recourſe to the Writings of the *Primitive Fathers*, it muſt be neceſſary to have a certain Knowledge of what theſe *Fathers* ſay, in Order to the obtaining the true Senſe of what is ſaid in the *Scriptures*; now this cannot be neceſſary, if what I have already proved ſtand firm, *viz.* That *Coriſt*, and his *Apoſtles* have already delivered plainly, in the *Holy Scripture*, all that is neceſſary to be believ'd and done in Order to Salvation; ſince what is plainly taught us can need no *Interpreter*, nor can this Aſſertion be agreeable to the Doctrine of the Church of *England*.

2*dly*, They who impoſe upon us any other certain *Authentick*, or *Infallible Interpreter*, as neceſſary that we may know what we ought to believe, or do, that we may be ſaved; if they be *Proteſtants*, and Members of the *Church* of *England*, muſt grant that *Chriſt alone is our Lawgiver*, that *Chriſtian Faith* is the Faith taught by *Chriſt*, and that the *Scriptures* are a *perfect* and *plain Rule of Faith and Manners*; and yet by introducing a Neceſſity of theſe *Interpreters*, that we may ſufficiently know the Mind of *Chriſt* contained in *Scripture*, they evidently deſtroy both theſe Aſſertions. For,

1*ſt*,

1*ſt*, Hence it doth plainly follow that the *Scriptures* cannot be truly owned as a *perfect Rule of Faith and Manners*, ſeeing a perfect Rule muſt both deliver all Things neceſſary to be believed, and done, and do this plainly, ſeeing we cannot learn them certainly from an obſcure Rule, if then it be neceſſary to receive the true Senſe of *Scripture* from the Writings of the *Fathers*, from *Councils*, or *Traditions unwritten*; it is evident that it is not the *Scripture*, but theſe *Interpreters* from whom we derive our *Rule of Faith*, that being only to be learned from the Senſe of *Scripture*.

2*dly*, Hence alſo it is evident, that *Chriſt alone cannot be our Lawgiver*, for ſeeing, as St. *Jerom* hath obſerv'd, the Mind of Chriſt is not to be learned from *the Sound of his Words in our Ears, but from the Senſe and Import of them*, if that can only be *ſafely* and *ſufficiently* known by a Recourſe to theſe *Interpreters*, it is evident, that not *Chriſt* himſelf, but theſe *Interpreters*, are the Teachers of his Laws, and ſo are our *Lawgivers*, becauſe from them, and not from him, we learn the Senſe and Meaning of his Laws.

" For if we may ſpeak the Truth " without Offence, he that requires that " other Mens Interpretations of the Laws " of *Chriſt* ſhould be received as true " and *Mr.* Chillingworth *Preface the* 1*ſt*, *Sect.* 10.

" and genuine; He requires indeed that " their *Interpretations* ſhould be to us " *Chriſt*'s Laws; and whatſoever He may " plead, yet wittingly or ignorantly, he " makes both the *Law* and the *Lawgiver* " inſignificant, and obeys only the *Inter-* " *preter:* For as if a Man would pretend " to obey the Laws of the King of *Eng-* " *land*, but would obey them only in that " Senſe which the *French King* ſhould put " upon them, whatſoever that might be; " every underſtanding Man would ſay, " He only obey'd the *French King*, and " not the *King of England.*" So if I ſhould pretend to obey the *Scriptures*, as being the *Laws* of *Chriſt*, but would obey them only in that Senſe which theſe *Interpreters* have or ſhall put upon them, who would not ſay that I obey'd the *Scriptures* and *Chriſt* in Pretence only, but indeed obey'd and bottom'd my Faith only upon theſe *Interpreters*; ſo plainly doth this Doctrine dethrone *Chriſt* from his Dominion over Mens *Conſciences*, and of one great Branch of his Kingly *Office*, and ſet up theſe *Interpreters* in his Place.

3*dly*, The Falſehood of this Doctrine is evident to a Demonſtration from this Conſideration, that none of theſe *Interpreters* have ever done this Work at all, they having never cleared, or ſhewed the certain

certain Senſe of one obſcure Place of *Scripture* concerning any Thing neceſſary to be believed or done; for what can be more palpably abſurd, and inconſiſtent with *Divine Wiſdom*, than to appoint a neceſſary Means for the obtaining the Effect, which he never yet did enable thoſe whom he had thus appointed to produce? or what is more repugnant to *Divine Goodneſs*, than to leave the Senſe of *Scripture* in Things neceſſary to be believed and done, uncertain, and obſcure, till it ſhall be made known, and cleared up by an *Interpreter* of his Appointment; and yet never enable him to make the conteſted Senſe of any *Scripture* known, or more clear in any Neceſſaries than it was before? Let it then be conſidered, that clearing any Place of *Scripture*, in the plain Import of that Phraſe, is rendring the Senſe of it clear to thoſe Perſons to whom before it was not clear; ſo that all they who before could not perceive what was the certain Senſe of ſuch a *Scripture*, may, from what they have done to make it clear, plainly apprehend what is the certain Import of the Words; and that thus no controverted Text of *Scripture* hath been ever cleared by any *General Council* is ſelf-evident, they only ſaying magiſterially that ſuch a Doctrine is proved from ſuch a Text of *Scripture*. But if to

do

do this, be to *interpret*, and clear up the Senſe of *Scripture*, all *Councils* good and bad, all *Proteſtants*, all Sects of *Chriſtians* do this as certainly and truly as any *General Council*, ſeeing they equally declare their Doctrines to be True, and proved from ſuch *Scriptures* as they alledge for Confirmation of them.

Now this Argument concludes as ſtrongly againſt all other Churches as againſt that of *Rome*, no other Churches having attempted to give us *authentick Commentaries* upon, or any *traditive Interpretations* of the difficult Places of the *Holy Scripture*, or even claim'd a Right to do ſo. Appoſite to this Purpoſe are the Words of Biſhop *Taylor*, who having cited from *Origin* this Rule, *We ought to bring Scripture for Confirmation of our Expoſitions*, ſaith, " Theſe Words are very conſide-
" rable to thoſe who are earneſt for our
" Admittance of *traditive Interpretation*
" of *Scriptures*, of which I ſhall give this
" Account, That beſides that there are
" none ſuch in Matters of Faith, there
" being no greater Variety, or Difference
" in any Thing than in their Expoſition
" of *Scripture*, no where ſo great Liber-
" ty, no where ſo little Agreement; be-
" ſides this, I ſay, that they are in *Com-*
" *mentaries of Scripture*, to be look'd up-
" on as ſo many ſingle Perſons, becauſe
" there

Duct. Dubit. B. 2. Ch. 3. R. 14. p. 474.

" there was no *Publick Authentick Com-*
" *mentary* any where, no Aſſembly in or-
" der to ſuch Expoſitions, no *Traditions*
" pretended, for the Senſe of controverted
" Places, but they uſed right Reaſon,
" the Analogy of Faith, the Senſe of the
" Words, and the Notice of the Origi-
" nals, and ſo they expounded certainly
" or probably, *as it happened.*" Add to this the remarkable Words of *Pſeudo-Juſtin*, that to ask why the *Prophets* did not give Reaſons for what they ſaid, is like to the Inquiry * *Why were not all the Scriptures given with an Interpretation, which was not done,* ſaith he, *becauſe the Mind, and Sentence of the Thing is plainly contain'd in the Narration of it, for which Cauſe the Scripture approved not of this way of manifeſting it ſelf by any Explication.*

As for the *Fathers* it is notorious, and fully proved, that they have perverted many Texts of *Scripture* from their true Senſe; but they have done nothing, that I know of, to clear up and render certain the true Senſe of one obſcure Place of

Diſſert. de Scripturarum interpretatione.

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* Διὰ τὶ μὴ πᾶσαι αἱ γραφαὶ ἡρμηνευμέναι παρεδόθησαν ἀφ' ὧν ἐκπεφάντων αὐτὰς; ἐπειδὴ ἐν τῇ τῶ πράγματος διηγήσει, ἐμφατικῶς πεφύκεναι τὸ πράγματος ἔννοια, διό τι οὐκ ἐδοκίμασεν ἡ γραφὴ τὸ ἐκδεικτικῶς αὐτὴν δηλῶσαι, Reſp. ad Queſt. 27.

Scrip-

Scripture. The *Primitive Fathers* have indeed uſed ſome few Phraſes, and Words contained in *Scripture*, in ſuch a Senſe, as makes it highly probable, that they bear the ſame Senſe in the *Scripture.* But tho' the *Heathen* Writers, and the *Jewiſh Paraphraſts* and *Rabbines* have done the ſame Thing, no Man of Senſe doth hence conclude them to be the *beſt*, and *ſafeſt Interpreters* of the *Holy Scriptures.*

The firſt *Father* now extant, who ſet himſelf profeſſedly to interpret the *Scripture* is *Origen*; and whoſoever will peruſe his *Commentaries* upon St. *Matthew*, and St. *John*, will find that He hath render'd many plain Places obſcure, but hath done little or nothing to clear up, and render certain the true Senſe of any Text contained in thoſe Goſpels. And laſtly, the Interpretation of *Scripture* by *Tradition*, can only ſignifie that ſuch, or ſuch a Senſe of the Words of *Scripture* hath been deliver'd down from the *Apoſtolick* Age, and owned by all Chriſtians, as the true Import of the Words of Chriſt, or of his *Apoſtles.* Now in this Senſe I verily believe it cannot be prov'd that the Senſe of one *obſcure Text of Scripture* hath come down to us after this manner, whereas it is certain that they have handed down to us by Tradition falſe *Interpretations* of ſome *Texts* of *Scripture*, ſometimes unanimouſly

nimouſly for four or five whole Centuries, and ſometimes throughout all thoſe Ages in which they bore the Name of *Fathers*; as for Inſtance,

1*ſt*, From thoſe Words, Gen. vi. 4. *The Sons of God went in to the Daughters of Men and begat of them Males*, iſti ſunt potentes, lxx. γίγαντες. Almoſt all the *Fathers*, for the firſt four Centuries, taught that the *Apoſtate Angels* lay with Women, and begat Giants of them.

This was the common Opinion of almoſt all the Ancient Fathers; to wit, of *Juſtin Martyr*, *Iræneus*, *Athenagoras*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, Cent. 2d; *Tertullian*, *Origen*, *Minucius Felix*, and St. *Cyprian*, Cent. 3d; *Lactantius*, *Euſebius*, *Epiphanius*, *Ambroſius*, *Hilarius*, *Sulpitius Severus*, Cent. 4th. Tho' in the very next Age this Opinion it was almoſt generally rejected; ſo little did they value the *Traditions* of former Ages.

2*dly*, From thoſe Words, 1 Cor. x. 11. *upon whom the Ends of the World are come*; and thoſe *of St. James*, Chap. v. 18. *the Coming of the Lord draweth nigh*; the *Primitive Fathers*, from the very Age of the *Apoſtles*, taught that *the End of the World*, and *the Day of Judgment were not far off*: So *Barnabas* and *Hermas*, Cent. 1ſt; *Irenæus*, Cent. 2d; *Tertullian*, St. *Cyprian*,

Cyprian, Cent. 3d; *Lactantius*, and *Pſeudo-Juſtin*, Cent. 4th.

3*dly*, All the Fathers from the 2d to the ſixth *Century*, have with one Voice declar'd that Chriſt, Matth. v. 28. *forbad Chriſtians to Swear at all*, as I have prov'd from near forty plain Citations from them in my Book of Traditions, *Part* 2d, *Ch.* 12. *Sect.* 7. and in the Note upon this Place; and if this be not ſufficient to prove that this was once the receiv'd *Interpretation* of the whole *Church of Chriſt*; let any Man produce a fuller Proof of their Agreement in the Senſe of any Text of *Scripture*, and then we may be inclined to receive it as the *Traditionary Senſe of Scripture.*

4*thly*, God by his Prophet *Nahum*, Chap. i. 9. threatens *An entire Deſtruction to the Nation of whom there he ſpeaks*, ſo that *he ſhould not need to do it any more.* This the *Septuagint* tranſlate thus, οὐκ ἐκδικήσει δὶς ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό, *non vindicabit Deus bis in id ipſum.* Now the *Fathers* being deceiv'd by this falſe *Interpretation* of the Words, have generally followed this Senſe of them, and from it have made many falſe, abſurd and pernicious Conſequences. Thus the 25th (*a*) *Apoſto-*

(*a*) ἐπίσκοπος, ἢ πρεσβύτερος ἢ διάκονος ὁ περὶα, ἢ ἐμπορικὰ. ὕκλοπῆ ἀλοὺς καθαιρείσθω καὶ μὴ ἀφορίζεσθω. λέγει γὰρ ἡ γραφή.

lical

lical Canon decrees, Can. 3. *That if a Biſhop, Presbyter,* or *Deacon be convicted of Perjury, Fornication, or Theft,* (if a *Clerk,* ſays *Baſil,* be guilty *of a Mortal Sin,*) *let him be depoſed from his Office, but let him not be ſeparated from the Communion of the Faithful,* λέγω δὲ ὅτι γεγονὼς οὐκ ἐκδικήσεως ἕνεκα τοῦ ἀῤῥώστου, *Epiſt. ad* Amphiloch. *Tom.* 3. p. 22. which is expreſsly contrary to St. *Paul*'s Precept, *not to Eat with ſuch Perſons,* but ἐξαίρειν, *to remove them* from the Society of Chriſtians, 1 *Cor.* v. 12.

2*dly*, St. *Jerom* concludes from theſe very Words, that neither the *Antediluvians* who periſhed by the Flood, nor the *Sodomites*, nor the *Egyptians* who periſhed in the Red-Sea, nor thoſe *Jews* whoſe *Carcaſes fell in the Wilderneſs*, ſhould be ſubject to any further Puniſhments hereafter; God, ſaith he, puniſhing them at preſent, *ne in æternum puniret*, that he might not puniſh them for ever; for if that be true, which the *Marcionites* cannot deny, the *Prophet* having ſaid, *non vindicabit Dominus bis in id ipſum*; then they that have been puniſhed, ſhall not afterwards be puniſhed; *ſi autem illi poſtea punientur Scriptura mentitur*; for if they ſhould be puniſhed hereafter, the Scripture would lye, which is Wickedneſs to affirm; *Receperunt ergo & qui in diluvio perierunt,* In locum.

& Sodomitæ, & Ægyptii, & Iſraelitæ in ſolitudine mala ſua in hac vita; all theſe Men therefore have in this Life received their evil Things; and this Senſe of the Words was owned by all the Writers of *Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline*, by *Regino* 1 Can. 246. by *Rabanus. Epiſt ad Heribaldum*, Cap. 10. And by this very Text, that *Arch-Rebel Becket* contended againſt *Henry* 2d. That tho' a Clerk was condemned for any Publick Crime, for the firſt Fault, He ſhould only be degraded, but if afterwards he ſhould become guilty of the ſame Crime, He ſhould be deliver'd up to the *Secular Magiſtrate* to be Puniſhed. Matth. Paris *ad annum Dom.* 164. p. 102. *Ranulphus de Biceto*, p. 536, 537. *Hoveden* Annal. Part 2. *p.* 282.

5thly, *Fathers*, *Churches*, *Canons*, *Councils*, from the Beginning till the Reformation, have unanimouſly agreed in this, that *'twas unlawful for any Chriſtian to put his Money to Uſury*; hence one of our *Homilies* ſaith, *He that encreaſeth his Money by Uſury*, goes to the Devil for Gain. See *Diſſert. de Script. Interpret.* on *Pſal.* xv. 5.

6thly, The whole Church of Chriſt from the Beginning held that *Eliſha the Tiſhbite* was to come again in Perſon as the Fore-runner of Chriſt's *ſecond Coming*

to

to Judgment. This, ſaith *Arethas*, is λόγος ἐκ παραδόσεως φυιτῶν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀπαρεγλέπτως, *an Opinion coming down to the Church without Variance*; it was, ſay *Huetius* and *Maldonate*, on *Matth.* xi. 14. & de la Cerda, *the moſt conſtant, and received Opinion of the Church, of all the Fathers, and of all Chriſtians*; and yet that it was a vain and falſe Tradition derived from the *Jews*, is fully proved in the Treatiſe of Tradition, *Chap.* 5. from *p.* 109, to 120. That written Tradition hath afforded no ſuch Evidence of the true Senſe of one obſcure Place of *Scripture*, I am very confident. In Apocalyps. *Cap.* xi. *p.* 942.

3*dly*, It ſeemeth to me very abſurd, and even ridiculous to ſend *Day-Labourers*, *Weavers*, *and Coblers*, or any of the Inferior Sort, from *Scripture*, to the *Fathers*, or *Councils*, to the *Church*, or her *Traditions*, to learn the Senſe of what is written in the *Holy Scriptures*. For 1. Can a Recourſe to the *Primitive Fathers* be the *wiſeſt*, and *ſafeſt Way of Interpreting Scriptures*, to thoſe Perſons who have no Knowledge of the *Fathers*, or of any *Scriptures* interpreted by them, no Skill to underſtand them, or to diſcern which of the Works which bear their Name, are *Genuine*, and which are *Spurious*; ſeeing then 'tis reaſonable to believe that God, *who would have all Men to be ſaved*, hath

left ſome Means of knowing what is neceſſary to be believed and done for their Salvation, and it is evident they cannot have this Knowledge from the Writings of the *Primitive Fathers*; 'tis certain that cannot be the Way appointed by God for the Obtaining of this Knowledge: Nor can they certainly rely upon the Judgment of the *Learned* in this Caſe; ſeeing the moſt Learned Perſons of the *Roman Church*, *Huetius*, *Petavius*, *Cotelerius*, *Ambianus*; and of the Church of *England*, as *Biſhop Taylor*, and *Dr. Cave* declare, that the *Doctrine of moſt of the Primitive Fathers concerning the Holy Trinity was inſincere, and ſometimes intolerable*; *and that many of them erred concerning the Divinity, and the Eternal Generation of the Son of God*; and Mr. *Whiſton*, Dr. *Clarke*, and Mr. *Jackſon*, and others, have produced ſome Hundred Teſtimonies of the *Primitive Fathers*, to confirm their Doctrine, and their *Interpretations* of the *Holy Scriptures*.

If 2*dly*, you ſend them to the *Church* for the Interpretation of the *Scriptures*, either you muſt ſend them only to the *Church* of the preſent Age, as it ſtands divided into *Eaſtern* and *Weſtern*, *Popiſh* and *Proteſtant*, *Lutheran Calviniſtick* and *Churches*; and then you muſt certainly inform them

them which of thoſe Parties may be depended on for their Inſtruction in all Things neceſſary to be believed, and done; or you muſt ſend them to the *Church of all Ages*, including that of the *Apoſtles*, and then you muſt firſt teach them what was the Doctrine of the *Apoſtles*, and ſo you ſend them back to their *Writings*, which yet you ſay are not ſufficient to acquaint them with their Doctrines without theſe *Interpreters*. Again, you muſt ſend them to the *True Church*, and ſo muſt teach them ſome certain Rules by which to know to whom that Title doth belong; now one Note of this kind being *Conformity to the Doctrine of the Apoſtles*, you muſt ſend them back to the *Scriptures*, to learn that Doctrine.

Laſtly ſuppoſe the *Unlearned* well acquainted with theſe Notes, how ſhall they be able to judge in this Caſe, ſeeing the Tryal *whoſe Doctrine is moſt conform to that of the antient Church*, requires a great Skill in the Writings of *Antiquity*, which the *Unlearned* cannot have.

If, 3*dly*, you ſend them to the *Decrees of General Councils* to learn of them what is neceſſary to be believed and done for their Salvation, the *Church* of *England* ſends them back to the *Scriptures* to examine by them the Truth of their *Dercees*.

Moreover, in order to this End, you muſt with certainty reſolve them in all theſe Enquiries; namely,

Whether there was ever any ſuch Thing as a *true General Council?* Whether they are of *Divine Right*, or only an *Humane Ordinance*, and a *prudential Expedient?* Whether they have any Promiſe of *Infallibility*, or not? Whether that Promiſe be abſolute, or only conditional; whether it relate to all, or only to Fundamental Truths; who are to meet, by whom they are to be called, and who is to preſide in them; when they are *General*, when *Lawful*, when *Free*, when they do act *Conciliarly*, and in due *Manner*, and with due Deliberation; now it is certain, that God hath enabled no *unlearned* Perſon, or *Mechanick* even to underſtand the Import of all theſe Enquiries, much leſs to ſearch into the Depth, or the true Meaning of them: 'Tis therefore certain, either that God hath not afforded to the Generality of Mankind any ſufficient Means of Salvation, or that he hath not obliged them to reſort, from *Scripture*, to *General Councils*, for the Knowledge of thoſe Means.

Now the Inferences which plainly follow from what hath been diſcours'd, are theſe:

1*ſt.*

1*ſt.* Hence it is evident, that the *Holy Scripture* is the only Rule by which the *Unlearned* can learn all that is neceſſary to be believed, or done by them in Order to Salvation. For ſince they cannot learn theſe Things from the Writings of the *Ancient Fathers*, from *Church*, or *Council*, or from *unwritten Traditions*, either they cannot learn them at all, or elſe they muſt do it from the *Holy Scriptures*. And if, as our *Church* ſaith, *thoſe things which are neceſſary to Salvation, are familiarly and plainly ſpoken in the Holy Scriptures to the Capacity of the Unlearned, and it is every Man's Duty to learn them thence*, this muſt be manifeſtly true; it being certain that the *Unlearned* may learn that thence, which is there *plainly and familiarly ſpoken to the Capacity of the Unlearned.* Hence do the Fathers unanimouſly teach, that our Lord, and the Sacred Pen-men of the Scriptures deſign'd by writing to *profit the moſt*, to *profit all Mankind*, to bring all Men, of what ſort ſoever, to the Knowledge of it, even the moſt rude, and moſt unlearned; and compoſing their Writings for the Salvation of thoſe that heard them, for the Salvation of *Greeks* and *Barbarians*, Learned and Unlearned, it became them to take Care they uſed Expreſſions of Publick Benefit to the Hearers, and which were

able to *affect every Ear*. That accordingly they did not hide their Doctrine in Darkneſs and Obſcurity, but uſed ſuch Speech as was apt to inſtruct the Multitude, and proper to provoke them to yield Attention to it, and give Advantage to the moſt Illiterate, that they uſed a plain, vulgar Language which all might learn and underſtand, which might be known to Small and Great, eaſy to be underſtood by Women and Babes, by all. That they made all Things belonging to them clear and manifeſt to all, that every one by himſelf, might by reading only, learn the Things that were ſpoken. That they made them manifeſt not only to Men of Underſtanding, but to Women and Children. That they plainly ſpoke the Truth, and ſpread before us the ſhining Beauty of it, and that in few and plain Words. So *Origen contra Celſ. Lib. 6. p. 275. l. 7. p. 372. Chryſoſtom. To. 2. Hom. 2. in John p. 561. in Matth. Hom. 1. p. 6. in Lazarum To. 5. p. 244. Clemens Alex. contra Julian. l. 7. p. 232. Iſidore Peluſiota l. 2. Ep. 5. p. 129. l. 4. Ep. 11. p. 461. Theodoret Serm. 8. adv. Græcos Ed. Sylb. p. 110, 111.*

3*dly*, Hence alſo it is evident that the *Church* of *England* doth allow all her Members, by their own common Reaſon, to diſcern and judge by the Rule of *Scripture*

ture what is neceſſary for them to believe in order to Salvation. For,

1*ſt*, If all her Members muſt make Profeſſion of this one *Article*, *That Chriſt hath ſo abundantly taught us all Religion and Works in the written Word, that we need not believe, or do any Thing but that which there is taught us*; then muſt they diſcern ſufficient Reaſon to believe the Truth of this Aſſertion, ſince no Man can be oblig'd to profeſs that as an *Article* of *Faith*, which he ſees no ſufficient Reaſon to aſſent to as ſuch.

2*dly*, *If in the Holy Scripture is ſufficiently contained what every Chriſtian ought to do, and what to eſchew, what to believe, and love, and what to expect at God's Hands*, then every *Chriſtian* may thence learn what he is to do, and to believe; and yet 'tis certain, he cannot learn that thence which he cannot diſcern to be ſufficiently contained in the *Scripture*.

3*dly*, *If there be nothing ſpoken obſcurely in one Place of Scripture which is not ſpoken in other Places of the ſame more plainly and familiarly to the Capacity of the Unlearned, and it be every Man's Duty to learn thence* all that is plain and neceſſary to Salvation, then muſt they be capable by that Faculty of Judgment God hath given,

given them, to diſcern what plainly is delivered to them in the *Scriptures*; ſeeing it could be no Man's Duty to learn that thence, which he could not ſufficiently diſcern to be contained in it.

4*thly*, The *Church* of *England* declares in her 20th Article, that even the *Church*, which is the *Witneſs and Keeper of Holy Writ neither ought to decree any Thing againſt the ſame, nor beſides it to enforce any Thing to be believed for Neceſſity of Salvation*; and therefore leaves all her Members free to judge by their own Reaſon, whether ſhe doth this or not.

5*thly*, In her 21ſt Article ſhe teacheth, *That Things ordained by General Councils, as neceſſary to Salvation, have neither Strength nor Authority, unleſs it may be declared that they be taken out of Holy Scripture*; and thereby teacheth all her Members, that they have a Right to examine by their own Judgments from the *Holy Scripture*, the Authority and Strength of their Decrees. And,

6*thly*, By declaring, *That what is not read in, nor can be proved by the Scripture, ought not to be believed, as an Article of Faith*; and by requiring of her *Biſhops* and *Prieſts to teach nothing as required of Neceſſity to eternal Salvation, but what they ſhall be perſuaded may be concluded*

and

and proved by the Scripture: And by teaching that all *religious Works are ſufficiently taught by Chriſt in the written Word*; She hath fully exc uded all *unwritten Traditions* from being Part of the Rule of Faith; and when *Churches*, *Councils*, and *Traditions* are thus excluded, there remains nothing but that Reaſon which is common to all Men, whereby to judge of the true Senſe of *Scripture*, and what is to be owned as an *Article of Faith* delivered in it.

SER-

SERMON IV.

1 THESS. v. 21.

Try all Things, hold fast that which is good.

FOR the right Explication of theſe Words, obſerve, that the *Apoſtle* doth not here bid the *Guides of the Church* try all Things, or require the People to hold faſt what they delivered to them, as Good; but rather lays down a Precept, or Inſtruction common to all *Chriſtians*, to all that they are oblig'd *to hold faſt that which is Good*, and not to ſuffer themſelves to be deceived by *falſe Prophets*;

phets; which being a ſtanding Ordinance, equally neceſſary at all Times, for the ſame End of holding faſt, what upon Tryal we judge to be true, is a ſtrong Argument, for the Perſpicuity, and full Sufficiency of *H. Scripture* for that End. For they that muſt *try all Things*, muſt try the Doctrines taught by thoſe who do pretend to be their Teachers; and therefore till they have made this Tryal, muſt not admit their Doctrines as *Articles of Faith*. For theſe Words plainly teach, that what we muſt *hold faſt*, muſt firſt be *try'd*. *Such Hearers*, ſaith St. *Baſil*, *as are inſtructed in the Scriptures, ought to try the Things ſpoken* by *their Teachers*, καὶ τὰ μὲν σύμφωνα ταῖς γεγραπταῖς λήξεσι, τὰ δὲ ἀλλότρια ἐκβάλλειν *and receive thoſe Things which are conſonant to the Scriptures, and reject thoſe which are Alien from them, becauſe*, St. Paul *hath* ſaid, *Try all Things, and hold faſt that which is Good.* Moral Reg. 28. To. 2. p. 426.

There is another Sentence of the like Import cited by all the *Fathers* from the ſecond Century, as the Preſcription of *Chriſt* or of this *Apoſtle*; to wit, *Be ye* γινεσθε τραπεζῖται *Expert Money-changers*, i. e. careful to diſcern what Doctrines are falſe and ſpurious, and what are true and genuine. *The Scriptures*, ſaith * *Clemens Alex. being deſirous that we ſhould know thoſe Things* which *are acceptable unto* * Strom. 3. p. 354.

unto God, Exhort us, to be skilful *Money-changers,* τὰ μὲν Ἀποδοκιμάζοντες, τὸ δὲ καλὸν κατέχοντες, *rejecting other Things, and holding faſt that which is Good.* And again *p.* 655. *He that hath not this Table of the Money-changers,* i. e. *that Reaſon which is the Criterion to diſcern Things by, how can He be a Trapezite, being not able to diſcern true Money from that which is adulterate. The divine Scriptures,* ſaith Origen *, *being conſider'd by ſkilful Money-changers,* who *know how to ſeparate counterfeit Things, which diſſemble the true, from what is really approved, and who obey the Command of Chriſt, ſaying* Γίνεσθε τραπεζῖται δόκιμοι *be ye good Money-changers, and the Doctrine of St.* Paul *ſaying, try all Things, and hold faſt that which is Good, will abſtain from ev'ry Kind of Evil. It behoves the Hearers of the Divine Myſteries,* ſaith ‖ Cyril *of* Alexandria, *to be ſkilful Trapezites, that they may know which is Good, and which is falſe Money; for Paul commands us to be ſkilful Trapezites, and to try all Things.* And again, *they who are ſkilful in the divine Myſteries, ought to remember that which is written,* Prove the Spirits; *and to imitate ſkilful Money-changers, who admit good Money, but carefully reject the Falſe. To which Things St.* Paul *exhorts us,* ſaying, *Be ye ſkilful Trapezites, prove all Things, and hold faſt that which is Good.*

* Tom. 19. in Joh. Ed. Huel. p. 268. Hom. 2. in Ezek. f. 135. C.

‖ L. 4. in Joh. p. 374. 407.; et lib. primo adver. Neſtor. p. 2.

This

This being then, according to the common Suffrage of the *Fathers*, either the Precept of our *Lord* or of his *Apoſtle*, and the Criterion by which we are to paſs this Judgment, being declared to be the *common Reaſon of Mankind*; Hence I infer this Doctrine, 'That 'tis the common Right of all Chriſtians, to try and 'to examine, by thoſe *Scriptures* which 'are their Rule of Faith, and Manners, 'all Things which are delivered to them 'as *Articles of Chriſtian Faith.*' This Propoſition I ſhall endeavour,

1. To explain, by giving the true Senſe in which we underſtand it. And then I ſhall proceed,

2. To the full Confirmation of it. And

1. When we ſay, that *ev'ry private Chriſtian is to interpret the H. Scriptures for Himſelf*, the Meaning of theſe Words is only this, that He is to endeavour to underſtand the true Senſe of the Words of *Scripture*, and not without Examination to receive it in that Senſe which other Men ſhall put upon it.

2. When we ſay, He is to do this by his *private Judgment*, we do not mean this in Oppoſition to the Judgment of all Mankind beſides Himſelf; (for ſuch a Judgment may reaſonably be ſuſpected to ſavour of great Arrogance and Self-Conceit) but in what He differs from the Church

Church of *Rome*, He muſt do it by his private Judgment concurring with the Judgment of all *Proteſtants*, i. e. of many hundred thouſands of learned, and judicious Perſons, and ſtrengthned by all the Arguments which they alledge from *Scripture*, Reaſon, and *Antiquity*, to confirm that Judgment. And what Pride, or what Want of Modeſty can it be, to cleave to a Judgment ſo confirm'd? To proceed then;

2. To confirm the Right of private Perſons, thus to examine what is propos'd to them by their Teachers, as an Article of *Chriſtian Faith*; Conſider

(1) That this is ſo abſolutely neceſſary, that without it they can have no Faith. For Faith is generally acknowledg'd to be an Act of Reaſon, and to be ſeated in the *underſtanding Faculty*. Whence it is evident, that I cannot aſſent to what I cannot underſtand, that being to aſſent to I know not what; And I cannot aſſent to that as an Article of *divine Faith*, which I cannot know to be revealed by God. If Faith be an Act of Reaſon, it is impoſſible that any Perſon ſhould have Faith, without a Reaſon of that Faith, i. *e.* 'tis impoſſible that any Perſon ſhould aſſent to that, as teſtify'd, and declar'd by God, without ſome Reaſon cauſing him to believe that God hath given ſuch a Teſtimony.

timony. In a Word, either all private Perſons muſt, by their own Judgment, examine, what their Teachers propound to them as an Article of Faith, or they muſt be oblig'd without Examination, to believe whatſoever they declare to be ſo; the firſt Aſſertion is the Foundation of the *Proteſtant Religion*, and the Denial of It, is the Subverſion of It: The ſecond is the *Fundamental Principle of Popery*, and muſt oblige the *Church of England* to own themſelves *Schiſmaticks*, in departing from thoſe Deciſions of their Superiours, to which they were oblig'd to ſubmit without Examination.

(2) This Doctrine, that Men muſt renounce their private Judgments, and give them up into the Sentiments of their ſpiritual *Guides* and Teachers, would have deſtroy'd *Chriſtianity*, when it was by the bleſſed *Jeſus* firſt preached to the *Jews*, and would have laid an Obligation on them, to reject *Chriſt* as an *Impoſtor*, and one who upon that Account deſerv'd Death, as their *Teachers*, and *Interpreters of Scripture* then did. For either when our Lord appear'd, the *Jews* had ſuch *Interpreters*, in whoſe Senſe they were bound to acquieſce, or they had not: If they had not; then were they left to the Interpretation of them, by their own private Judgments; and then, why may

not others be left, to interpret the more eaſy and familiar *Scriptures* of the new Teſtament, by the like private Judgment? If it be ſaid, that they had ſuch *Interpreters* of *Scripture*; ſeeing they had no other *Guides*, or *Interpreters*, beſides thoſe *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, thoſe *Prieſts*, and *Rulers of the Jews*, who had declar'd that it was evident from *Scripture*, that *Chriſt* could be no *Prophet*, John vii. 52. That all the People that thought Him a true *Prophet* were deceived, and were expos'd to that Deluſion, becauſe *they knew not the Law*, ver. 47, 48. that *this Man could not be of God, becauſe He kept not the Sabbath*, John iii. 16. And that by *their Law He ought to die*, John xix. 7. Hence it is evident, that if they were oblig'd abſolutely to ſubmit their own Judgments to theſe Interpreters of *Scripture*, they were oblig'd to judge *Chriſt* could be no *true Prophet*, but a Deceiver worthy of Death.

(3) That this is the Right and Duty of all Men and *Chriſtians*, we learn both from the Doctrine and Practice of *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*, who exhort private Men to *ſearch the Scriptures*, to diſcern the Agreement of their Doctrine with them, and commend them that did ſo. Our *Bleſſed Lord* ſaid to the *Jews* in general, John v. 39. *Search the Scriptures; for in them*

you

you think you have eternal Life, and *they are they which teſtify of Me. But you will not come unto Me, that you may have Life. If you had believed Moſes, you would have believed Me, for He ſpake of Me.* He put the Queſtion to them, *Why of yourſelves judge Ye not what is Right?* Luke xii. 59. He introduceth *Abraham*, ſaying unto them, *they have Moſes, and the Prophets, let them hear them*; Luke xvi. 29. and tells them, they believed not in Him, *becauſe they hearkned not to Moſes*, John v. 46. From all which Words it is evident, (1) That *Chriſt* by this Enquiry, *Why of yourſelves judge ye not what is Right?* declar'd, that by their own Reaſon, attending to his Miracles, and to what *Moſes* and the *Prophets* had ſaid of Him, they might be ſufficiently aſſur'd of the Truth of his Doctrine, and of his divine Miſſion from the Father. (2) That by ſearching the Scriptures, they might know the Doctrines of eternal Life, and be ſufficiently convinced that He was the true *Meſſiah*, and that by hearing *Moſes, and the Prophets* they might be more effectually preſerv'd from coming to the Place of Torments, than by one rais'd from the Dead. And (3) that the Reaſon why they did not come to Him, that they might have Life, was not for Want of Knowledge, or Conviction of the

Truth, but for Want of Willingneſs, and a good Diſpoſition to embrace it. Chriſt alſo ſpeaks to the common People of the *Jews*, concerning that which the *Phariſees* either could not, or would not underſtand thus; *Hear, ye and Underſtand*, Math. xv. 10. He enquires of the *Jews* thus, *Why do you not underſtand my Sayings?* and adds, that it was, *becauſe they could not hear his Word*, John viii. 43. i. e. they had not a Mind well diſpos'd to obey it. *Theſe Things*, ſaith *Chriſt*, *I ſpeak unto you, that ye might be ſaved*, John v. 34. And can it then be ſaid, without the greateſt Derogation, both from his Wiſdom, his Goodneſs, and his Love to their Souls, that He only taught them the Way of Salvation, in Words that they could not underſtand, and ſo acted in plain Contradiction to the deſign'd End of his ſpeaking to them?

2 Cor. iii. 12. The *Apoſtles* do profeſs and teſtify, that they uſed *great Plainneſs of Speech*, that *by the Manifeſtation of the Truth they commended themſelves to every Man's Conſcience*, and that if *the Goſpel was hid from any* that heard them preach it, *it was hid only from them, whoſe Minds the God of this World had blinded*; and that if either they or others in their preaching uſed

1 Cor. xiv. 9. *Words not eaſy to be underſtood*, it *could not be known what was ſpoken*, and that therefore *they had rather ſpeak five Words*

which

which their Hearers might underſtand, than ten thouſand Words in an unknown Tongue. It was then their Practice, to preach ſo as that the meaneſt of their Hearers might know the Meaning of their Words; and ſuitable to their Practice was their Doctrine. For (1*ſt*) they require all *Chriſtians* to *contend earneſtly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints*, Jude 3. And *to ſtrive together with one Soul and Spirit, for the Faith of the Goſpel*, Phil. 1. 27. Which plainly intimates, that they both had, and underſtood that Faith. Since otherwiſe they muſt ſtrive, and contend for they knew not what.

And as our Lord requir'd the People *to beware of falſe Prophets*, and told them that *they might know them by their Works*; ſo his *Apoſtles* required them to *try all Things*, and after Tryal, *to hold faſt what was good*; to *try the Spirits whether they be of God, or not, becauſe many falſe Spirits were gone out into the World.* Where alſo a certain Rule is given, whereby to know them, ſo, that both the Duty, and the Means enabling them to perform it, are plainly laid before them. St. *Paul* having attempted, by Reaſoning from the *Scriptures*, to prove *that Chriſt muſt needs have ſuffered and be raiſed from the Dead*, and that our *Jeſus was the Chriſt*, commended

Matt. vii. 15, 16.

1 Joh. iv. 1.

Act xvii. 3. 11. the *Bereans* for *ſearching the Scripture*, and from them judging of his Doctrine. From the ſame Topick St *Peter* proves our Saviour's Reſurrection, alledging to that Purpoſe the Saying of the royal Pſalmiſt, Act. ii. 27. *Thou ſhalt not leave my Soul in Hades.* Now here let it be noted, that then the *Jews* had no *infallible Interpreter* to depend upon, but only ſuch *blind Guides* for their *Church Governours*, whom, if they follow'd, our Lord aſſures them, *they would be led into the Ditch*; they therefore muſt either be enabled by their own private Judgment, to learn theſe Truths from *Scripture*, or they in vain were ſent by *Chriſt*, and by his *Apoſtle* were directed to the *Scripture* for that Purpoſe.

In fine, whatever their Judgments may be, yet this is certainly the Practice of all Mankind. The *Heathens*, if they embrace any Religion at all, muſt do it on the Foundation of that *natural Reaſon* which is common to them with all Mankind; becauſe they have no other Principle of Action. And all who own the *Holy Scripture* as their Rule, of what Perſwaſion ſoever they may be, endeavour to confirm their ſeveral Tenets, by *Scripture* interpreted by their own Judgments, and confirm'd by their own Reaſonings, and ſo own it to be every Man's Right, by his own

own private Judgment, to paſs his Cenſure on thoſe *Scriptures* and Reaſons they alledge for their Opinions; even *Roman Catholicks* are forced in many Caſes, to allow the Uſe of Private Judgment in the Interpretation of *Holy Scripture*, and in aſſenting to the *Articles of Chriſtian Faith.* It is particularly allowed by all their Writers, when theye ndeavour, either from *Scripture*, or from *Reaſon*, to convert us to the *Romiſh Faith.* For either we muſt judge of the Senſe of the *Scriptures* they alledge, and of the Strength of the Reaſons they produce for it, or we muſt not? If we muſt not; why then do they propound them? Do they hope to convert us, by *Scriptures* without any Senſe, or by Reaſons which have no Strength that we can judge of? If we muſt uſe our Judgment in this Matter, then every *Proteſtant* by his Reaſon muſt judge of the Senſe of thoſe *Scriptures*, and of thoſe Reaſons they alledge for Confirmation of their Faith.

Ob. 1 And whereas it is repreſented as a great Abſurdity, *that Every Man, how illiterate ſoever, and ignorant, ſhould be his own Judge* and *Director on Earth in the Affairs of Religion*; I anſwer

(1) That if the Doctrine of *our Church* be true, to wit, *that Holy Scripture hath delivered all Things neceſſary to Salvation,*

familiarly and plainly to the Capacity of the Unlearned, the Imputation of Abſurdity muſt fall upon the Doctrine of *our Church*; ſeeing it muſt be own'd, that the Unlearned muſt be able to judge of what is *plainly and familiarly delivered to the Capacity of their Underſtanding*.

(2) This Right of all Men, who have the free Exerciſe of that Reaſon, which is the only Faculty God hath given them by which to judge of Truth and Falſehood, and to diſcern betwixt Good and Evil, may be confirm'd from the Doctrine and Practice of *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*. For

Matth. xxviii. 19. Mark xvi. 15, 16.

(1) Our *Bleſſed Lord* ſends his Diſciples *to preach the Goſpel* πασῃ τῇ κτίσει *to every Creature*, adding, that *He that believeth it ſhall be ſaved, He that believeth not ſhall be damned*. Now this ſuppoſeth, that all Men might learn from their Preaching, all that was neceſſary to be known for their Salvation. He alſo requires them to teach thoſe whom they baptized, *all Things* that *He had communicated to them*; And this again ſuppoſeth them capable of Underſtanding what they were to learn. His Diſcourſe recorded by St *Matthew* from the *Mount*, and by St *Luke* upon the *Plain*, is addreſſed to a great Multitude, and yet the Cloſe of It, in both Places, plainly ſuppoſeth that they were wiſe

wiſe enough to underſtand and do, what He then taught, and guilty of great Folly, if they neglected ſo to do, *Matt.* vii. 24, 26.

St *Paul* declares, that in the preaching of the Goſpel they uſed *great Plainneſs* of *Speech, and did by Manifeſtation of the Truth coumend* themſelves *to every Man's Conſcience.* He declares that He Himſelf preached Chriſt, *warning every* Man and admoniſhing *every Man, teaching them in all Wiſdom, that He might preſent every Man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus,* Col. i. 28. And ſaith by Way of Reprehenſion, to the *Corinthians* uſing unknown Tongues in their Aſſemblies; *if you ſpeak not Words eaſy to be underſtood, how ſhall it be known what is ſpoken?* So that in this Caſe, this Pretence of the Incapacity of the unlearned to underſtand, what plainly is delivered in the Word of God, ſeemeth to differ little from that of the *Phariſees,* John vii. 48, 49. *Have any of the Rulers, or Phariſees believed in Him? but this People that knoweth not the Law is accurs'd.*

(3) If theſe Men be incapable of judging of the Senſe of *Scripture,* even in Things, in which it uſeth *great Plainneſs of Speech,* and Words *eaſy to be underſtood*; they muſt be leſs able to judge, among th e numerous Pretenders, to be Judges and

and Directors *in Affairs of Religion* for them, to whoſe Judgment and Direction they muſt commit themſelves, or why they ſhould prefer one of them before another. Moreover this ſuppos'd Incapacity lyes as much againſt their being directed by any others, as againſt their being directed by the plain Precepts and Declarations of the *Holy Scriptures*. For they can as well hear them read from that plain Rule, in all Things neceſſary to be known by them, as receive them from the Mouth of theſe *pretended Judges*, and can be more aſſur'd of what is plainly taught them there, than of what is taught them by Men not only ſubject to Errors and Miſtakes, but alſo apt to put their own Sentiments into their Catechiſms.

This alſo puts all Religions upon a Level as to them; for if they be not able *to judge for themſelves in Affairs of Religion*, they muſt be alſo unable to prefer one Religion before another, and to diſcern a greater Truth and Excellency in one than in another; and ſo where-ever their Lot falls, they muſt be ſubject to the Guides and Directors of that Religion where they live; they muſt be *Papiſts* in *Popiſh Countries*, *Presbyterians* where that Government prevails, and (which is more conſiderable) they muſt be all this, without

without Blame or Guilt, to whatſoever Party they adhere. For He, who is incapable of judging on which Side the Truth lyes, or to whoſe Judgment and Direction He ſhould commit Himſelf: He who cannot judge, which of the Pretenders are to be his Guides, cannot juſtly be blamed, for not doing that, which He was in no Capacity to perform: Nor will a good and righteous God condemn Men, for not doing that, which He had given them no Ability to do. Thus that Expedient, which was deſigned to bring Men under our Direction, and oblige them to ſubmit to our Judgment *in their religious Affairs*, leaves them without Offence whoſe Judgment ſoever they ſubmit to.

Ob. 2. It is ſuggeſted, that it ſeems to ſavour of Pride and Want of *Chriſtian* Modeſty, to conceive that our private Judgment of the Mind of God in *Scripture*, is to be prefer'd before the publick Judgment of *General Councils*, *Convocations*, and all the learned Members and Doctors of the Church. To this I anſwer

(1) This is that Pride, which thoſe ſeven thouſand were guilty of, who *bow'd not the Knee to Baal*, when all *Iſrael* beſides had agreed to do ſo. And ſuch a Piece of Pride and Want of Modeſty, which was practis'dy thoſe few *Jews* who believ-

ed

ed in Chriſt, and judg'd Him the *true Meſſiah* which was to come, againſt the Sentence of the great *Sanhedrim*, and of thoſe *Scribes* and *Phariſees* which *ſat in the Chair of Moſes*. This Immodeſty was alſo the Foundation of the Reformation of the *Church of England*, and of all other *Proteſtant* Churches; the Doctrines, and ſuperſtitious Practices they renounc'd, being confirm'd by many of their *General Councils*, and own'd as agreeable to the true Senſe of *Holy Scripture*, or confirm'd and handed down to them by *Catholick* Tradition. This is that Want of Modeſty, which is the Glory of all ſincerely virtuous and pious Men in this licentious Age, in which the common Bulk of *Profeſſors* every where live in notorious Violation of the Precepts of *Chriſtian* Piety and Virtue. This laſtly is that Pride and Want of Modeſty, which is to be retain'd by all Chriſt's *Witneſſes* and faithful Servants, when all the World ſhall *wonder after the Beaſt*, Rev. xiii. 3. When *Power was given Him over all Kingdoms, Tongues*, and *Nations*, and *all that dwell on the Earth ſhould worſhip Him, whoſe Names were not written in the Book of Life* (ver. 7, 8.) when *He ſhould make the Earth and them that dwell therein, and both Small and Great, Rich and Poor, Free*

Free and Bond, to *receive his Mark* (ver. 16.) But to anſwer to this Pretence more directly;

(2) God having made it all Men's Duty to *try all Things, and hold faſt that which is Good*; to *give a Reaſon of their Faith*; to *ſearch the Scriptures*, as being thoſe Writings in which they believed they had the Doctrines of eternal Life; and to *hear Moſes and the Prophets*, that by attending to them, they might avoid the coming to the Place of Torments; *Chriſt* having put the Queſtion, *Why do you not underſtand my Words?* and *why of your ſelves judge ye not what is Right?*

He having promiſed, that *if any Man was truly willing to perform his Will, He ſhould know his Doctrine*, John vii. 17. that if *He would obſerve his Precepts, He would manifeſt Himſelf unto Him*; that under the new Covenant, *He would put his Laws into Men's Minds*, and *write them ſo* clearly *on their Hearts*; *that they ſhould all know Him, from the Leaſt to the Greateſt*, Heb. viii. 10, 11; I ſay after all theſe Promiſes, aud ſolemn Declarations, ſtill to diſtruſt or imagine, that after our moſt ſincere Endeavours, we may not be able to know that Truth, or diſcern that Duty, which God requires we ſhould believe and do, in Order to Salvation, is not

not Humility and Modeſty, but Want of Faith in God's Promiſes; 'tis in Effect to fear He will not be as Good as his Word; 'tis to conceive He lays Commands upon us, reſpecting our eternal Intereſts, which He will not enable us to perform; and ſaith unto us, *He hath ſhew'd Thee, O Man, what is Good*, and *what the Lord requireth of Thee*, when indeed He hath not done it.

And having thus return'd a full Anſwer to the pretended Abſurdity of judging of the Senſe of *Scriptures* for our Selves, in Oppoſition to the Sentiments of *Councils*, and Aſſemblies of learned Doctors; I proceed in the laſt Place to ſhew the great and numerous Abſurdities, which follow from the Denyal of this Liberty to *Chriſtians*, under Pretence of their Incapacity to know the true Senſe of *Scripture*, and conſequently of the Neceſſity which lyes upon them to acquieſce in the Judgment of Others. Now

(1) This implies, that the *Scriptures* can be to them no Rule of Faith; ſince that requires, *Firſt*, that it contain all the neceſſary Articles of Faith. *Secondly*, that it deliver them ſo plainly, that all that are concern'd to know them, may learn them by attending to that Rule.

(2)

(2) Hence it follows, that our *Church* muſt have taught falſe Doctrine, by requiring all her Members to make Profeſſion of this Article, that *Chriſt hath ſo abundantly taught us all Religion and Works in the written Word, that we need not believe or do any Thing, but that which there is taught us*, which Profeſſion no Man can be oblig'd to make, who cannot have ſufficient Reaſon to believe it true. This I have prov'd by five other Reaſons in the Sermon of the Perſpicuity of Scripture P. 71, 72.

(3) This lays a Neceſſity upon them of departing from the *Proteſtant* Rule of Faith, and admitting that of the *Church of Rome*; viz. the acquieſcing in the Judgment of others concerning ſomething neceſſary to be believ'd or done, for their Salvation. For if there be any neceſſary Point of Faith, or Manners, which we cannot learn by our own Judgment, for that we muſt entirely depend upon the Judgment of others, and muſt be oblig'd to acquieſce in that Senſe of *Scripture*, which theſe *Interpreters* judge true; and ſo theſe Interpreters, whoſoever they be, muſt be as neceſſary to our Salvation, as any *infallible Interpreters* are by the *Church of Rome* ſuppos'd to be.

(4)

(4) This Pretence gives the Lie to the frequent Declarations of the *Apoſtles*, that in preaching of the Goſpel they uſed *great Plainneſs of Speech*, and thought this ſo neceſſary as to declare, that *if they did not uſe Words eaſy to be underſtood, no Man could know what was ſpoken*; that therefore they *by Manifeſtation of the Truth, commended themſelves to every Man's Conſcience*, and made it *ſhine ſo clearly*, that *if their Goſpel was hid from any*, It *was only hid from thoſe, whoſe Eyes the God of this World had blinded*, leaſt *the Light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt ſhould ſhine unto them*. *Satan* was therefore wiſer than to believe this Doctrine. And ſurely it muſt ſeem unreaſonable, to conceit that Chriſt ſhould ſend his *Apoſtles* to preach his Goſpel to every Creature, and ſay, *He that believeth ſhall be ſaved, He that believeth not ſhall be damned*; if they ſo preached, that the unlearned, *i. e.* the Generality of Believers, could not be ſaved by hearing what they taught; but muſt lye under a Neceſſity of being damned, for Want of a Capacity to underſtand what they ſaid; that they ſhould declare that the Things contain'd in their Goſpels were written, *that we might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt the Son of God, and believing might have Life thro' his Name*, and

yet

yet ſhould order Matters ſo, that only learned Men could obtain this Life, by reading what they writ; that they ſhould preach Chriſt to ev'ry Man, with a Deſign *to preſent ev'ry Man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus*, and yet ſhould fail of this Deſign in Reference to all that were unlearned; that they ſhould declare, that the End of our Faith was *the Salvation of our Souls*, and yet leave all the Unlearned incapable of Salvation by that Faith they taught. In a Word, it is certain that when we ſpeak to one another, we ſuppoſe, that they to whom we ſpeak are able to underſtand the Meaning of our Words. All our Tranſactions are built upon this Suppoſition, that Men may know our Meaning by our Words; all Laws and Proclamations of our Governours, all Commands of Parents and Maſters, all Inſtructions which we give to others, all Bargains that we make, all Converſe we have with one another, do manifeſtly ſuppoſe, that they to whom theſe Laws, Inſtructions, and Commands, are giv'n, do underſtand the Meaning of our Words. Let it be then conſidered, that the Words of *Holy Scripture* do in like Manner declare God's Meaning, in what He ſpeaketh or commandeth, as do the Laws of Men, and their Inſtructi-

ons written, or Words ſpoken; and that they were certainly deſign'd to teach all them, to whom they were directed, what they were to believe and do, for the obtaining that Salvation, which they promiſed, as well to the Unlearned, as to the Learned. And then He who aſſerts, that the Unlearned cannot be of Capacity to underſtand them, in Matters neceſſary to be believ'd or done, in Order to that End, muſt condemn *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*, as ſpeaking of theſe neceſſary Things ſo, as the Generality of their Hearers could not underſtand them, and ſo as they could not obtain that End, which they deſign'd in ſpeaking of them; and muſt aſſert that they ſpake ſo, as no wiſe Inſtructor ever did; yea that the All-wiſe God hath ſo delivered his Laws and Inſtructions, relating to our eternal Welfare, as no wiſe Law-giver, no diſcreet Inſtructor ever did. Now let any reaſonable Man judge, whether this be ſuitable, to theſe Declarations of his in *Holy Scripture*; *the Commandment is not hidden from Ye. He hath ſhewed thee, O Man, what is Good, and what the Lord requireth of Thee. The Statutes of the Lord are clear, making wiſe the Simple. Thy Word is a Light and a Lamp, the Entrance of it giveth Underſtanding to the Simple.*

Simple. All my Words are in Righteouſneſs; they are plain to Him that ſeeketh Underſtanding. Deut. 30. 11. Micah 6. 8. Pſal. 19. 7. & 119, 105. Pro. 6. 23. 8, 9.

SERMON V.

PHIL. I. 10.

That ye may be Sincere, and without Offence, till the Day of Chriſt.

IT is very ſurpriſing to moſt Men, that *real Sincerity* in our Endeavours, to know and to perform our Duty, both to God and Man, by an impartial Search into thoſe *Scriptures*, which in the Judgment of all *Proteſtants*, and eſpecially of the *Church of England*, is a perfect and ſufficient Rule of all Things neceſſary to be believ'd or done for the Salvation of a *Chriſtian*,

Chriſtian, ſhould not be thought ſufficient, to procure the Favour of God, in the Pardon, or Non-imputation of our unwilling Errors; if we conſider, (1.) That in the Judgment of the very *Heathens*, this *Simplicity* or Sincerity is accounted one of the three *Primitive Virtues*, from which all other Virtues are derived, and is by them defined thus; *Sincerity is that Virtue of the Mind, whereby it is ſimply*, i. e. *without Hypocriſie*, and *without reſpect to Gain or Fame, and entirely enclin'd to do what the Mind conceiveth to be beſt and fitteſt to be done.* And *he is the ſincere Man*, ſaith St. *Baſil*, *who without any Mixture of Hypocriſie, in all Seaſons and in all his Actions, exactly proſecutes thoſe Things, which he conceiveth moſt conducing to Piety, and the approving of his Heart to God.* Moreover, either the Favour of God is not attainable at all, or no Endeavour is needful to ſecure it, or an inſincere and *Hypocritical* Endeavour is ſufficient, or a ſincere Endeavour to know, and do his Will, is that alone which will procure that Bleſſing. And (3.) This Truth is fully confirm'd by the Words of my Text; for the *Apoſtle* prays that the *Philippians* may *abound in all Knowledge* and Perception, ἐις τὸ δοκιμάζειν *that they might be able to*

Reg. Brev. p. 631.

try and to prove the Things that are moſt excellent, that ſo they may be ſincere and without Offence. Now, what Rule hath God giv'n *Chriſtians*, whereby to try the Things that are moſt excellent, but the Rule of Faith and Manners, contain'd in the *H. Scriptures?* And what Faculty hath he giv'n us, by which to know and to perceive the true Senſe and Import of this Rule, but our Reaſon? And muſt it not hence follow, that a real, and impartial Endeavour to know the Will of God, by the beſt Uſe of thoſe Faculties, which God hath given for that End, muſt render us Sincere, and ſo without Offence in the great Day of our Accounts? In proſecution therefore of this Subject, I ſhall endeavour,

1. To ſtate this Matter as exactly as I can, and to ſhew what is requiſite, to render us Sincere in our Enquiries after, and acting ſuitably to, what we verily believe to be the Will of God.

2. I will endeavour to prove, that this Sincerity is certainly ſufficient to procure the Favour of God, in the Pardon or not imputing to us our unknown and unwilling Errors.

3. I ſhall attempt to ſhew the fatal and pernicious Conſequences of the contrary

trary Doctrine, both with respect to God and Man. And

4. I shall draw some plain Inferences and practical Conclusions from this Doctrine. I begin

1. With the Requisites of true Sincerity, and they are these.

1. A Freedom from all worldly Motives, and sinister Designs, and from all carnal Lusts, which hinder our sincere Enquiry into the Will of God, and our Inclination to perform it. Hence are these Sayings of our Lord, that *every one that doth Evil, hateth the Light, and cometh not unto the Light, lest his Deeds shou'd be reproved.* And that *Men love Darkness more than Light, because their Deeds are Evil.* John iii. 19, 20. Hence speaks he thus to the *Jews, How can ye believe, who receive Honour of Men, and seek not that Honour which comes from God only.* John v. 44. This stifled their acting suitably to their Convictions, so that *they durst not confess him, because they loved the Praise of Men more than the Praise of God.* John xii. 43. And saith, *they did not hear his Word, because they were not of God, and had not the Love of God in them,* John. viii. 47. v. 40, 42.

(2) There must be in us a real Disposition to do the Will of God made known

unto us. To this our bleſſed Lord doth Promiſe the Knowledge of his Will, by ſaying, *If any Man will do his Will, he ſhall know* of *his Doctrine*, i. e. If he hath an honeſt Heart, prepared to obey the Will of God, when he is convinced of it, he ſhall have Means ſufficient to convince him, that it is the Truth. Thence the *Apoſtle* argues their Sincerity by ſaying, *We truſt we have a good Conſcience in all Things, being willing to live honeſtly.*

John vii. 17.

Heb. xiii. 18.

(3) Hence, as a neceſſary Conſequence of this, it follows, that the ſincere Perſon muſt uſe an honeſt Induſtry in the performing all the Means, which God hath put into his Power, for the finding out the truth; ſince he who truly wills the End, muſt uſe the Means requir'd by God, for the obtaining of the End; and he that conſcientiouſly doth this, may be aſſur'd of the divine Acceptance, the *Apoſtle* having taught us, that *if our Conſcience doth not condemn us* (of Inſincerity,) then *have we Confidence with God.* Two Things ſeem further neceſſary to be obſerv'd, for the right ſtating of this Matter. (1.) That this being now become a Queſtion among *Proteſtants*, and eſpecially among thoſe of the *Church of England*, who own the *H. Scriptures* as the only true perfect, and ſufficient Rule of all Things neceſ-

1 Joh. iii. 21.

ſary

ſary to be believ'd and done, in order to Salvation, or the obtaining the Favour of God; the Queſtion can be only this, whether real Sincerity and honeſt Induſtry to find out the Truth, contain'd in a Rule, ſufficiently, and plainly containing all Things neceſſary to be believ'd or done, for the obtaining the Favour of God, be not ſufficient to ſecure us of his Favour, in the Pardon, or Non-imputing to us for Condemnation, our unknown, and unwilling Errors. Happy therefore are in this the *Proteſtants*, *bona ſi ſua norint*, if they were truly ſenſible of their own Felicity, and would not go back *into the Tents of the Philiſtines to whet their Goads.* Since they have a Rule inſpir'd by the God of Truth, indited by the Spirit of Truth, and teaching plainly, and ſufficiently, all that is neceſſary to be believ'd and done for our Salvation. *He hath not dealt ſo with other Nations, neither have the Papiſts ſuch Knowledge of his Ways*; they being ſent for their Enquiry after Truth, to human Authority, human Deciſions, and human Traditions. And ſo it is no Wonder they do not find, what God never deſign'd to teach them thence. So that they have juſt Reaſon to ſay to their Leaders, as *Chriſt* did to the *Jewiſh Lawyers*; *Wo unto you, for you have taken away from us the Key of Knowledge.* (2)

I add, that no Rules of Sincerity can be preſcrib'd to all Men, ſo that all Men ſhall be equally oblig'd to uſe the ſame Means, in order to their being deem'd Sincere. For, ſeeing it is certain, that a juſt and gracious God, will require of no Man more than the Ability, Capacity, and Opportunities which he hath put into his Hand, enable him to perform; and ſeeing the Abilities, and Capacities, and Opportunities of ſome, in ſearching out the Truth, are vaſtly different from thoſe of others; to preſcribe the ſame Rule for all, to render them Sincere, is, as proverbially we ſay, to *ſhape a Coat for the Moon in all her Changes.* The Knowledge which is required of a learned Perſon to render him Sincere in his Enquiries, muſt be much greater, than that which is requir'd from the ſimple and unlearned Peaſant. The Knowledge which is ſufficient to render the poor Man and Day-labourer Sincere, may be too little to excuſe them, who being raiſed above his low Sollicitudes of making Proviſion for his Family, enjoys much greater Leaſure for Improvement in Knowledge. The Caſe ſeems here exactly parallel to that of Charity in giving Alms, where it is pronounced ſufficient for every Man to do according to his Ability; becauſe *God accepts according to what we*

we have, and doth not require what we have not: And where the *Widow's Mite* is more than the rich Man's large Oblations. Having premiſed theſe Things, I proceed to the Confirmation of my Doctrine, That real Sincerity, and honeſt Induſtry, in our Enquiry after what we are to believe and do, muſt be ſufficient to procure the Favour of God, in the Pardon of, or not imputing to us our unknown and unwilling Errors; as will be evident,

1. From the Conſideration of the Deſcription of Sincerity, now laid before you. For certainly, he that doth all that he can do or is oblig'd to do, or God requires him to do, for the obtaining of his Favour, doth all he ſhould do to that End; but he that uſeth a ſincere Endeavour and honeſt Induſtry, to know his Duty, doth all he can do, and all that God requires him to do, in order to that End; he therefore doth all he ſhould do. He that denieth the Minor of this Syllogiſm, muſt be oblig'd to ſhew, what a ſincere and honeſt *Chriſtian* can, or is oblig'd to do more, or elſe muſt own this ſhining Truth, That a juſt and a good God cannot put the eternal Salvation of his Creatures upon any thing, but what he hath put in their Power to do. And ſince 'tis ſo rare a Thing, for any Man to be able

able to ſay, *He hath done all that poſſibly he could do, to obtain the Favour of God*, I am verily perſuaded, that God will accept him as Sincere in this Affair, who uſeth ſuch a Meaſure of Induſtry, to know, and to perform his Duty, as human Prudence, and ordinary Diſcretion ſhall adviſe him to, in Matters of this Conſequence.

(2) That which is unavoidable, cannot be criminal, much leſs ſo criminal as to exclude us from the Favour of God; but Errors entertained after our honeſt Induſtry, and ſincere Endeavours to find out the Truth, are unavoidable, and ſo indeed are all our Failings, which proceed not from want of Care and Diligence to know, but purely from Ignorance, or want of Knowledge of our Duty; for no Man can chuſe to ſhun what he could not ſee. So that the Underſtanding, which is the Eye of the Soul, muſt firſt diſcern, or apprehend a Thing to be fit to be done, or not done, before the Will can be in a Capacity to chuſe, or to refuſe the doing it. So that where our Ignorance of any of *Chriſt*'s Laws, is join'd with an honeſt Heart, and remains, after our ſincere Endeavour to know the Truth, we may, ſaith Mr. *Kettlewell*, take Comfort in our ſelves, and be confident, that it is involuntary, and innocent.

(3)

(3) Where real Sincerity and honeſt Induſtry is uſed to find out the Truth, by conſulting the Rule of divine Truth, there can be no Fault in the Will. Now where there is honeſt Induſtry to Search out the Truth, and a real Diſpoſition and impartial Sincerity in our Endeavours, to know and to embrace it, there can be no Unwilllingneſs, either to know or do it. Since then God meaſures the Faults of Men by their Wills, where there is no Fault in the Will, there can be no Guilt. And then no Man is guilty, but he that is, or may be conſcious to himſelf, that he would not do or believe, what he knew he ought to do or believe, or would do or believe, what he knew he ought not to do or believe. Now if a Man be ſimply, and after his beſt Endeavour to know the Truth, ignorant of his Duty, his Error is involuntary. For the Will hath nothing to do, where the Underſtanding doth not direct. God therefore will impute nothing to us at the laſt Day, either to ſave or to condemn us, but what proceeded from our own free Will and Choice.

(4) This will be further evident from the Nature of Rewards and Puniſhments. For theſe can take Place, only in reference to thoſe Actions which we can chuſe, and are at liberty to exert, or to omit. For no Actions, can be imputed to any Man,

Man, either for or againſt him, further than they depend upon him. There is no Thanks due to him, for doing that, which he could not avoid; nor can any charge be laid againſt him, for failing to do, what he could not do. Seeing then, this is the Caſe of every honeſt Man, that having made the beſt Enquiry he can to know his Duty, he unavoidably ſtands oblig'd, to act ſuitably to the Convictions of his Conſcience; he never will be puniſh'd with Excluſion from the divine Law, for acting ſuitably to it. And this may be illuſtrated from the Caſe of *Abimelech*, for having made his beſt Enquiry concerning *Sarah*, before he took her into his Houſe, he ſpeaks to God thus; *In the Integrity of my Heart have I done this*; and God anſwers to him thus, *I know thou didſt this in the Integrity of thy Heart*. And therefore doubtleſs he will paſs the ſame kind Sentence, upon all that in the Sincerity and Integrity of their Hearts, are ſubject to unknown and unwilling Errors.

(5.) That can be no condemning Sin of which no Man can, and therefore no Man is oblig'd to repent; but no Man can repent of believing that, which after his ſincere Enquiry and honeſt Induſtry to know the Mind of God, he judgeth to be a certain Revelation of his Will. For all

all true Repentance implies a Confeſſion, that we have done fooliſhly, what we both might, and ought to have left undone. Seeing then no Man can truly think he hath done fooliſhly, or what he ought not to have done, in acting ſuitably to that, which after his beſt Search, he judges to be the Mind and Will of God, (nor is it in his Power to help his judging thus, or to avoid his acting ſuitably to his Judgment,) it muſt be an Abſurdity to require him to confeſs, he hath done fooliſhly or what he ought not to have done, or to be ſorry for what he could not help, or was not able to avoid; and then he can be liable to no juſt Puniſhment, and much leſs to Excluſion from God's Favour, upon that Account. I ſhould not be ſo much afraid, ſaith Mr. *Chillingworth*, of ſimple and involuntary Errors, as of asking Pardon for them. For this is tacitly to imply, that God is angry with us for them, and that were to impute to him, this ſtrange Tyranny of requiring Brick where he gives no Straw, of expecting to gather where he ſtrew'd not, and to reap where he ſow'd not, and of being offended with us for not doing, what he knows we cannot do. *Preface, Sect* 25.

(6.) This will be further evident, from the Obligation which lyes upon all Men,

Men, after their beſt Endeavours to find out the Truth, to follow the Dictates of their Conſcience, tho' it ſhould be erroneous; becauſe in this Caſe, he is only guilty of an unknown and unwilling Sin, and doth that only, which under that unhappy Circumſtance, he could not avoid; whereas all Sin committed againſt the Dictates of our Conſcience, that we are doing what God hath forbidden, muſt be wilful and Preſumptuous Sin; becauſe it muſt be done deliberately, againſt that, which I conceive the Authority of God commands me to abſtain from doing; and ſo I muſt be as willing to do what I think Evil, as if my Conſcience was not erroneous. He that after an honeſt Induſtry to know his Duty, acts agreeably to the Dictates of his Conſcience, acts with a ſincere, honeſt and true Intention, to do the Will of God; whereas he that acts againſt it, muſt do it with a baſe diſhoneſt Mind, and an Intention to do Evil. And this is ſuitable to the Doctrine of St. *Paul*, who after he had declar'd, that *all Meats were lawful*, and conſequently, that he that thought otherwiſe, had a *weak* and erroneous Conſcience, adds, that ὁ διακρινόμενος, *He that diſcerneth* or *puts a Difference betwixt Meats lawful and unlawful*, and yet did not act ſuitably to that Perſuaſion, *is damned*

or

or ſelf condemned, if he did eat of them; becauſe he eateth not of Faith, or from a firm Perſuaſion of the Lawfulneſs of what he did. Having thus confirm'd this Aſſertion, I proceed

(7) To ſhew the fatal and pernicious Conſequences of the contrary Doctrine, that Sincerity thus deſcrib'd is not ſufficient to obtain the Favour of God in the Pardon, or not Imputing to our Condemnation, our unknown and unwilling Errors. And now the pernicious Conſequences of this Doctrine, with reſpect to God are,

(1) That it highly reflects upon the Divine Goodneſs and Mercy, and rendreth it leſs than that of a kind Maſter to his Servant, or of a loving Parent to his Child. For can it be conſiſtent with that Goodneſs of God, which pardons many Things in which our Wills have the leaſt ſhare, tho' ſome they have, to exclude them from his Favour, whoſe Error hath nothing in it of the Will? Doth any gracious Maſter uſe Severity towards the Overſight and Indiſcretions of his honeſt Servant? Or any tender Parent ſhew Rigor upon ev'ry Error or Indiſcretion of his obedient Son? Is not ev'ry good Man prone to paſs by ſuch Offences, as are unwillingly committed againſt Him? Since then theſe imperfect Mea-

ſures and Degrees of Love, which are found in the Hearts of all good Men, are of Force more than ſufficient, to make them bear with the Slips of honeſt Ignorance; that infinite Height of Love which dwells in God, muſt needs make him much more diſpos'd to bear with them. If no kind-hearted loving Man would do this, it muſt needs be the greateſt Injury to an infinitely loving God, to ſuſpect he would be ſevere in puniſhing them. *The Judge of all the World will do Right*, and therefore will not exclude Men from his Favour, for falling into an Error, which, after all their Care and Diligence, they could not diſcern or avoid.

(2) This Doctrine that aſſerts, that ſincere and honeſt Men may forfeit the divine Favour, for their unwilling and undiſcernable Miſtakes, reflects injuriouſly upon the Juſtice of God; and ſeems to repreſent Him as a rigid Exacter, and a cruel Tyrant. I know not how to Repreſent this more lively or convincingly to you, than in theſe Words of Mr. *Chillingworth*? „ To ſay that God obli-

Chap. 2. Sect. 104. " ges Men, upon pain of Damnation, not " to miſtake thro' human Frailty and " unwilling Error remaining after a " ſincere and honeſt Induſtry to find out " his Will, is to make God a Tyrant,

" and

" and to ſay that like *Pharaoh* he gives " no Straw, and yet requires Brick; and " that he reaps where he ſows not; that " he will not be pleaſed with our utmoſt " Endeavours to pleaſe him; that he " will not accept us according to what " we have, but requires of us what we " have not; which whether it can con- " ſiſt with his Goodneſs, with his Wiſ- " dom, or with his Word, I leave it to " honeſt Men to judge. Should I, (ſaith " he) deal thus with my Servant, for " miſtaking his Way, after his ſincere " Endeavour to find out the right Way, " would not any Man ſay, I was an impo- " tent, fooliſh and unjuſt Maſter, for being " offended with him, for doing it? And " ſhall we not tremble, to impute that " to God, which we ſhould take in " foul Scorn, if it were *imputed to our* " *Selves*." Let us not, my Brethren, be ſelf condemned by our own Actions and Profeſſions. Do we not juſtly condemn, and very tragically, but very truly, repreſent the Practice of the *Church of Rome*, in burning, butchering, and maſſacring myriads of *Proteſtants*, for acting ſuitably to the Dictates of their own Conſciences, after their beſt Endeavours, to know their Duty, as doing what is repugnant to the true Spirit of *Chriſtianity*, to the Principles of Humanity, and to the

common Right of all Mankind? How dreadful then and unexcuſable muſt it be in us, to lay this more heavy Charge upon that God, who ſtyles himſelf *the God of Love*, and whoſe Character it is to be *rich in Mercy, and plenteous in Goodneſs, to the Sons of Men*, that he will caſt Myriads of Souls and Bodies into eternal Torments, for following the Dictates of their own Conſcience, and doing that, which after their ſincere Endeavours and honeſt Induſtry to know and do his Will, they were convinced it was their Duty to do, or to abſtain from doing; this being to charge God, with that very Thing, which we ſo juſtly, and ſo ſeverely have condemned in the *Church of Rome*?

The pernicious Conſequences of this Doctrine with reſpect to us, are theſe;

(1) That this robs Men of all ſolid Comfort, after their beſt and moſt ſincere Endeavours to know and to perform the Will of God; this being not ſufficient, according to this Doctrine, either to afford Men any juſt Ground of Favour with God here, or Happineſs hereafter. And why then doth the *Apoſtle* ſay, *This is our Rejoycing, even the Teſtimony of our Conſcience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, we have had our Converſation in this World?* why doth St. *Paul* adviſe us, δοκιμάζειν *to approve our own Actions*

2 Cor. i 12. Gal. vi. 4.

tions to our ſelves, that we may have Rejoycing in our ſelves? Why doth *St.* John declare that if *our Conſcience doth not condemn us*, then *have we Confidence with God? To deny this*, ſaith Mr. *Chill.* is *to rob God of his Goodneſs, and Man of his Comfort, to make Man deſperate, and God a Tyrant.* Preface, p. 14.

(2.) The natural Conſequence of this Doctrine is this plain *popiſh Tenet*, that All Men muſt, without examination, depend upon the Judgment of their *Superiors*, and ſubmit to all that they are pleaſed to require them to believe and do. For certainly there is no Medium between theſe two Aſſertions; either Men muſt be left to their own private Judgment, to diſcern what they are to believe or do: or they muſt be oblig'd *abſolutely* to ſubmit to the Judgment of their *Superiors*, in thoſe Caſes. If the latter be maintain'd, then that is the Communion with which I muſt join in Faith and Practice, which my *Superiors* direct me to, whether in *Italy*, in *England*, or in *Scotland*. But if this ſeems too groſs to be admitted, as being as full a Juſtification of *Popery* and *Presbytery*, as of the *Church of England*, and plainly tending to overthrow the very Vitals and Eſſence of the *Proteſtant Religion*, then it muſt be granted, that Men are left to judge for

themſelves, what they are to believe or do, for the obtaining the Favour of God: Or elſe it muſt be ſhew'd that there is ſome other Medium to be found betwixt theſe two, which never hath been yet attempted. Now from what hath been diſcours'd we learn,

(1) That it cannot be abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation, to join in external Communion with a Church eſtabliſh'd in any Nation; ſince this would oblige us to damn all thoſe, who do not thus join in Communion with us, tho' they do it in the Sincerity of their Hearts, and after their beſt Endeavour to diſcern their Duty, and muſt conſtrain us to aſſert, that no Man after this Enquiry, can continue under this Miſtake, thro' human Frailty and unwilling Error, or that God will damn, or caſt Men out of his Favour, for an unknown unwilling Error, and will condemn them, for acting ſuitably to the Dictates of their own Conſciences. The great Abſurdity of ſuch a decretary Sentence appears from the Conſideration, that it ſubjects Men to Damnation, and to the Loſs of the divine Favour, whether they conform, or they do not. For it is certain, that he that joins in Communion with the *Church of England*, whilſt his Conſcience tells him it is a Sin to do ſo, is ſelf-condemned,

and

and guilty of a wilful Sin, and ſo is out of the Favour of God; if then external Communion with the *Church of England*, whilſt his Conſcience tells him it is a Sin to do ſo, be neceſſary to entitle this Man ſo perſuaded to the Favour of God, he muſt be out of his Favour, whether he doth thus communicate, or he doth not do it.

(2) From what hath been diſcours'd, we learn that *Chriſtian Love* and brotherly Kindneſs is due from us to all, whom Charity obliges us to judge, are only guilty of unknown Miſtakes and unwilling Errors, common to them with others ſubject to the like human Frailties. For

(1) The *Apoſtle* enumerates theſe, as the genuine Fruits of Charity. (1.) That λογίζεται κακόν *It thinketh not Evil of*, and imputeth not Evil to any Man, *i. e.* It permits us not to ſurmiſe or ſuſpect that Evil of any Man, which we do not certainly know him to be Guilty of. It doth not allow us, ſaith *Theodoret*, to cenſure his Miſcarriages, as done out of Malice, or ill Intentions, becauſe we cannot know the inward Intentions and Diſpoſitions of Mens Hearts. (2.) *Charity believeth all Things*, i. e. all the Good which we have any Charitable Ground to think or to believe of others. *(3.)* It

hopeth all Things, i. e. it enclines us to hope the beſt of Mens Intentions, Purpoſes, Profeſſions, and Actions liable to Doubt; that their Intentions, and Purpoſes are upright; their Profeſſions, ſincere, and their Actions done according to the Dictates of their Conſcience, after their honeſt Endeavours to know and to perform their Duty. And ſeeing it has been proved, that this Sincerity will certainly entitle us to the Favour of God here, and to Happineſs hereafter, it alſo muſt entitle us to the Charity and Kindneſs of our *Chriſtian Brethren*. For can we reaſonably think him unworthy of our Favour, to whom God will extend his Favour, or to exclude them from Communion with us here, who ſhall enjoy his bliſsful Preſence in the World to come; eſpecially if we conſider how expreſsly St. *John* hath taught us, *He that loveth God, muſt love his Brother alſo*.

(2) Conſider, how expreſsly our great Judge hath ſaid, *Judge not, and ye ſhall not be judged*; *Condemn not, and ye ſhall not be condemned*; and thereby hath informed us, that our raſh and uncharitable Judgment of our Brother, will render us obnoxious to his righteous Judgment and his Condemnation. Now we judge raſhly when we judge that Action done upon cor-

corrupt or evil Principles, which, for any thing we can know to the contrary, was well intended, and free from an ill Design: Or that Person hypocritical or obstinate, who perhaps erres only thro' Weakness and Infirmity, or want of better Information. For in these Cases, saith St. *Paul*, *Judge nothing before the time till the Lord come, who will bring to Light the hidden Things of Darkness, and will make manifest the Secrets of Men's Hearts.* Whence it is evident that what is hidden and not brought to Light, what is not manifest, as the Hypocrisie, the Pride, the Obstinacy of our Brother, in many Cases cannot be what doth depend upon the inward Thoughts and Councils of the Heart, which we cannot discern, is by this Rule reserv'd to *Christ*s Judgment; and we by passing our Verdict on his inward Thoughts and secret Intentions, must be too forward, and guilty of rash Judgment. 1 Cor. iv. 5.

(3) Consider, that if we damn Men, or cast them out of the Favour of God, for unknown or unwilling Errors or Mistakes, we shall pass a severe Judgment upon our selves; since *what Measure we mete, will be meted to us again.* For who of us is not subject to unknown Errors and unwilling Mistakes? nor can we pretend to, or plead

plead any other Excuſe for them, but our Sincerity. And how can we reaſonably plead this in excuſe of our own Errors and Miſtakes, if we do not allow it as a ſufficient Plea for others, in the like Caſe?

In fine, it being only our Sincerity in what we do, which renders any of our Actions acceptable to God, and Sincerity being an uniform Virtue, requiring the ſame Diligence and honeſt Induſtry to know our Duty, in one, under the like Circumſtances, as in another, it ſeems hence to follow, that the ſame Sincerity is requiſite, to render us *Conformiſts upon Principle*, as to render others *Non-conformiſts upon Principle*. If then after our beſt Enquiry, we ſtand obliged to act according to our Judgments, by holding external Communion with the eſtabliſh'd *Church of England*; we muſt be ſelf-condemned, if we allow not Diſſenters, after a ſincere Enquiry into their Duty, to act agreeably unto the dictates of their Conſciences. I conclude then with the Words of St. *Paul*, *Grace be with all thoſe who love the Lord Jeſus in Sincerity*. Eph. vi. 24.

SER-

SERMON VI.

ROM. ii. 6, 7, 10, 16.

God will render to every Man according to his Deeds: (7) *To them who by patient Continuance in Well-doing ſeek for Glory——and Immortality, eternal Life.* (10) *Glory Honour and Peace to every Man that worketh Good——* (16) *In the Day when God ſhall judge the Secrets of Men by Jeſus Chriſt according to my Goſpel.*

THESE Words afford many good Obſervations, which I ſhall only briefly mention; as,

1. That in the final Audit there will be no Enquiry made concerning

ing our Faith, no Judgment will be paſſed upon us, no Rewards diſtributed, purely on the Account of our Faith, but only according to our Works; ſo ſaith my Text; ſo our great Judge; *Behold I come quickly, and my Reward is with* me, *to render unto every Man according as his Work ſhall be*, Rev. xxii. 12. Of which Deportment, the Reaſon ſeemeth evidently to be this, that good Works, or the Obedience of Faith, is a ſufficient Demonſtration of the Truth and the Sincerity of our Faith, according to thoſe Words of St *James*, *I will ſhew Thee my Faith by my Works*, Ja. ii. 18. whereas the Faith which produceth not good Works, how Orthodox ſoever it may be, is dead and cannot ſave us.

2. Hence we may profitably obſerve, that Salvation is promiſed to them only, who *do good Works*, and who *by patient Continuance in well-doing*, ſeek *for Glory and Immortality*. It therefore cannot be our Wiſdom to depend upon a Death-bed Sorrow, when thro' the whole Tenor of our Lives, we have neglected this *well doing*, ſince that cannot denominate us Doers of good Works, which is a plain Confeſſion, that we have not perform'd them till the time of Death. Had our juſt Judge, the *H. Jeſus*, given the leaſt Encouragement to ſuch Men to expect Salvation,

Salvation, he muſt have cancell'd all the Obligations He hath laid on *Chriſtians* to do whatever He commanded: He muſt have ſolemnly declar'd, that Holineſs of Life was not requir'd as a Thing neceſſary to our future Happineſs, ſeeing Men might be Happy who in their Lives were never holy. And laſtly, He muſt have been the greateſt Patron of a licentious, and wicked Life, as promiſing Salvation to all that have ſo lived, provided they were ſorry for it when they came to die.

(3.) Hence it is evident, that we are to be judged at the laſt Day, not by the Sentiments of the *ancient Fathers*, or by the Senſe which they have put on the *Scriptures*, not by the Definitions or *Decrees of Councils*, or the pretended *Doctrinal Traditions* of the *Church*, but by the *Goſpel* preached, and indited by the *Apoſtles*, ſaith St. *Paul*; and by the Words of our great Lord and Maſter; for, ſaith He, *He that believeth not my Words, hath one that judgeth Him; the Word that I have ſpoken* ſhall *judge Him at the laſt Day*, Joh. xii. 48. And if we muſt be judged by the Words of *Chriſt*, and his *Apoſtles*, ſurely we muſt be able to underſtand them, in all Things neceſſary to be believed or done in order to Salvation. For can it rationally be conceived, that a righteous God will paſs the Sen-

Sentence of Condemnation upon Men, for not doing that, which, after their ſincere Endeavours, they could not know to be their Duty; Or for doing that, which they could not know to be forbidden?

But the Doctrine I chiefly intend to proſecute is this; that a Virtuous and Pious Life is certainly ſufficient to bring All that conſciencioufly practiſe it to an Eternal State of Happineſs, or in the Words of St. *Paul*, *that if we have our Fruit unto Holineſs, the End ſhall be Eternal Life*, Rom. vi. 22. This Doctrine as it is fully contain'd in my *Text*, ſo doth it ſhine from other Places of *H. Scripture* with the brighteſt Evidence. For

1. That which hath *the Promiſe of this Life and that which is to come*, muſt be ſufficient to ſecure to us the Enjoyment of the Life to come; but *Godlineſs*, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, *hath the promiſe of this Life, and of that which is to come*, 1 Tim. iv. 8. Now what doth Godlineſs import, but ſuch a powerful Impreſſion of the divine Excellencies, and his great Goodneſs to us in *Chriſt Jeſus*, as begets in us a ſuitable Deportment to him in our Lives? When therefore the Conſideration of his Truth, and his infallible Knowledge of all Things, produceth in us a firm Aſſent to, and cordial Belief of all that he

he hath plainly taught us by his *Holy Prophets* and *inſpir'd Apoſtles*, and eſpecially by that *great Prophet*, whom He ſent unto the World to declare his Will to us, that beloved Son whom He hath commanded us to *hear, in all that He ſhould ſay unto us*; when the firm Belief of his Almighty Power, Truth, and Faithfulneſs, doth cauſe us to rely upon his Promiſes, eſtabliſhed and confirmed to us in *Chriſt Jeſus*, by whom we have *Redemption thro' his Blood, even Remiſſion of Sins*, by whom *we are delivered from the Wrath to come*, and *by whoſe Reſurrection we are begotten to a lively Hope of an Inheritance incorruptible reſerved in the Heavens for us*; when the Apprehenſion of his Power, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs to us in *Chriſt Jeſus*, and his Readineſs to ſupply all our Wants, induceth us to come with humble Confidence to the Throne of Grace, for Grace, and ſuitable Helps in all our Exigencies, and truſt that our Petitions ſhall find Acceptance thro' the Interceſſion of our great *High Prieſt*; when the Conviction, that all the Bleſſings we enjoy entirely are derived from his free and undeſerved Goodneſs and Mercy to us in *Chriſt Jeſus*, doth induce us highly to eſteem them, to give Him the

the Praiſes due unto Him, and to make ſuitable Returns of Duty for them; when the Belief of his ſovereign Power to diſpoſe of all our temporal Intereſts and Enjoyments, becauſe they are entirely derived from Him, and lent us only during Pleaſure, cauſeth us with Patience to ſubmit to his Will, and with Contentment to acquieſce in his good Pleaſure, and chearfully to reſign all theſe Concernments to his wiſe Diſpoſal; when the Conſideration of that all-ſeeing Eye, which beholds all our Thoughts and Actions, in order to a future Retribution, that divine Juſtice which will render to all Men according to their Works, and that Holineſs of God, which makes it neceſſary for Him to hate all Iniquity *with a perfect Hatred*, doth beget in us a religious Fear of offending Him, or being obnoxious to his Juſtice, and a holy Care to *cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit, perfecting Holineſs in the fear of God*, and herein to exerciſe our Selves, to *have always Conſciences void of Offence* towards Him, and never wilfully to do what is a Provocation to the pure Eyes of his Glory; when our Knowledge of Him as our Creator, Lord, and Governour, to whom we owe all Duty and Subjection, of the Equity and Advantage of our

our Obedience to his Holy Laws, and his Ability, and Promiſe to reward our Service, produceth in us a fix'd Reſolution, and conſtant, chearful, and ſincere Endeavour, to obey Him, and walk before Him unto all well pleaſing; when laſtly our Senſe of his great Love to us in *Chriſt Jeſus*, doth produce in us ſuitable Returns of Love, and our Apprehenſion of Him as our chiefeſt Good, and only true Felicity, doth cauſe us to chuſe Him as our Portion, and cleave to Him in Oppoſition to all other Objects of our Love, and to rejoyce in his Favour, more than in the Enjoyment of all other Things; then do we live godly in this preſent World, and have a certain Title to all the Bleſſings, God hath promiſed to them that *Live a godly Life.*

2. *The Grace of God which bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to us, to teach us, denying all Ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, to Live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this preſent World; looking for the bleſſed Hope and the glorious Appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, Tit. ii. 12, 13. If then this ſober, righteous, and godly Life is all this *ſaving Grace* hath taught us, and if by thus living we may expect *this bleſſed Hope*, then muſt this Life ſufficiently aſſure us of our future Happineſs. Now

what it is to live *godly* I have ſhewed already. To live righteouſly, is to be Juſt and Upright in all our Dealings betwixt Man and Man, and ſtill to deal with others, as in like Circumſtances we would be dealt with; to be true to our Words, exact in the Performances of our Promiſes, and to do no Injury to any Man in his good Name, Eſtate, or Perſon, much leſs in the Concernments of his precious Soul.

And to live ſoberly, is to live (1) in the due Government of our Paſſions, ſo as that they do not indecently boil up within us, or break forth into opprobrious Words, and rancorous Expreſſions. (2) To moderate all our Appetites and Affections to, and our Deſires of all worldly Things ſo, as that we can ſit down contented with our Portion, not being anxiouſly ſollicitous about worldly Things, nor purſuing them by unlawful Means, but living as Men whoſe Portion is in Heaven, and whoſe Hearts are chiefly ſet on Things above; ſo to temper our Deſire of Applauſe and Reputation in this World, as only to purſue it with exact Regard to what is Virtuous and Praiſe-worthy, and to virtuous Ends, the doing Good to others; that we ſo moderate the Cravings of our Throat, and the Gratification of our Palates, as not

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to eat or drink to the impairing our Health or Reaſon, or the inflaming our Luſts, or the rendering our ſelves unfit for the Performance of that Duty which we owe to God. And laſtly, that we be ſo Moderate, in reference to the Pleaſures of this World, that all the Pleaſures in which we do allow our ſelves, be ſuch as call for no Repentance; in all which Things the *Heathen Moraliſts* conſpire with the Rules of *Chriſtian* Prudence.

3. By what we do intirely attain the End for which *Chriſt* ſuffered Death upon the Croſs, by that we muſt obtain Aſſurance of the Benefits of his ſalutary Paſſion, Remiſſion of Sins, and being ſaved from the Wrath to come; but this we do by *dying unto Sin, and living unto Righteouſneſs*; for *Chriſt bore our Sins in his own Body on the Tree*, that *we being dead to Sin, might live unto Righteouſneſs*, 1 Pet. ii. 24. And they, ſaith the *Apoſtle Paul*, who are thus conformed to *Chriſt*'s Death, as to be dead to Sin, and henceforth living to God, and yielding their Members *Inſtruments of Righteouſneſs unto Holineſs*, ſhall be conformed to Him *in the Likeneſs of his Reſurrection*, and ſhall live with Him, *Rom.* vi. 5, 8. Faith therefore in this Caſe, can be no further requiſite, than it is neceſſary to

engage us to die unto Sin, and to live unto Righteouſneſs.

4. This will be further evident, from the Obligation which lies upon all *Chriſtians* to imitate the divine Perfections. For we are never called to imitate the divine Power, Wiſdom, or Knowledge, theſe being incommunicable Attributes, in which we are not able to reſemble Him; but only in his Truth, and Faithfulneſs, by *ſpeaking the Truth from our Hearts*, and being faithful to our Promiſes; in his Holineſs, by being holy in the whole Tenor of our Converſation, and *cleanſed from all Filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit*; in his Righteouſneſs, by *being righteous, as He is righteous*, juſt and upright in all our Dealings, with our Fellow-man; in his Love, and Kindneſs, according to theſe Words of the *Apoſtle*, *be ye Followers of God, as dear Children, and walk in Love*, Eph. v. 1, 2. In his Mercy, Patience, Compaſſion, and Long-ſuffering; for *Put on*, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, *as the Elect of God, Bowels of Mercy, Kindneſs, Meekneſs, Long-ſuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, even as God for Chriſt's Sake hath forgiving us*, Col. iii. 12, 13. *Eph.* iv. 32. Now they, who do ſincerely endeavour in theſe Things to follow the Example of the Deity, are ſtiled the *Children of their heavenly*

heavenly Father, *beloved and obedient Children*, the *Elect of God*, an *holy Nation*, *a choſen Generation*, *a peculiar People*; 1 Pet. ii. 9. *to ſhew forth the Virtues of Him that hath called them*, and are ſaid, to have *put on the new Man*, *which is created after the Image of God*, *in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs and Truth*, Eph. iv. 24. He therefore that doth thus imitate the divine Perfections, muſt be beloved of God, and fitted for Communion with Him here, and the Enjoyment of Him hereafter. And ſince the Nature of true Holineſs conſiſts in the Participation of the divine Nature, in being renewed after the Image of God in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, in being holy in all manner of Converſation, as He that hath called us is Holy, 1 *Pet.* i. 15. Hence it muſt plainly follow, either that they who do reſemble God in Holineſs, who are renewed after his Image, who are made Partakers of a divine Nature, may periſh everlaſtingly; or that true Holineſs muſt render us ſecure of Future Happineſs.

5. Where the Fruits of the good Spirit are, there is a Child of God, an Heir of Glory. For, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, *as many as are led by the Spirit of God*, *they are the Sons of God*, *and if Sons*, *then are they alſo Heirs of God*, *joint*

Heirs with Chriſt, Rom. viii. 14, 17. Hence is this Spirit dwelling in us, repreſented as the *Pledge*, and *Earneſt of our future Inheritance*, and by Him we are ſaid to be *ſealed up unto the Day of Redemption*; Eph. 1. 13, 14. and to have this Spirit *witneſſing to our Spirits, that we are the Sons of God*, Rom. viii. 16. Now the Fruits of this good Spirit, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, are *Love* to all that call upon the Lord from a pure Heart; 2 *Tim.* ii 22. *Peace* with the ſame Perſons, *Long-ſuffering*, *Gentleneſs*, *Meekneſs*, *Temperance*, *and Faith*; by which we cannot underſtand Faith in our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, that being antecedently requiſite to the Enjoyment of the *Holy Spirit*, but either Fidelity to our Words, and Promiſes, which is the ſole Foundation of all Juſtice in Commerce, Bargains, and Tranſactions among Men. Or elſe that Faith which is *the Expectation of Things hoped for, the Evidence of Things not* ſeen, and ſo is the moſt powerful Inducement to have our Fruit unto Holineſs, that the End may be eternal Life; for *we through the Spirit wait for the Hope of Righteouſneſs by Faith*, Gal. v. 5.

6. This laſtly will be evident, from the Conſideration of the Nature and Deſign of Faith; it being reaſonable to conceive that a good and wiſe God cannot

not require us to believe ſuch Things, on pain of his Diſpleaſure, which only ſerve to ſtuff our Heads with Notions, but have no Influence on our Hearts and Lives, to make them better; ſince then the disbelieving of them would be pernicious to us, and yet the believing them would do us no Good; the Deſign of God, in requiring us to believe that *Jeſus is the Chriſt*, is this, that *believing we may have Life thro' his Name*, Joh. xx. 21. And the End of our Faith *is the Salvation of our Souls*, 1 Pet. i. 9. He therefore, whoſe unerring Wiſdom directs Him always to act ſuitably to his own Ends, can require us to believe nothing, but what hath a real Tendency to the Obtainment of that Life, and that Salvation, which is the End of our whole Faith; nor will He at the laſt Day, condemn us for any Errors or Miſtakes in Matters of our Faith, which is conſiſtent with that Holineſs of Life, or that ſincere Obedience, to which He hath annex'd and promiſed Salvation; ſince then He muſt condemn thoſe to whom He hath promiſed Salvation.

Now the Conſequences of this Doctrine are theſe;

1. That Faith can be no further neceſſary to Salvation, than it is neceſſary to this End, that we may lead a virtuous

and pious Life, that we may die unto Sin, and live unto Righteouſneſs, or that we may perform ſincere Obedience to the Commandments of Chriſt. For ſeeing He hath ſo expreſsly ſaid, *You are my Friends if ye do whatſoever I command you*; Joh. xv. 14. and promiſed, (*v.* 10.) *that if we keep his Commandments, we ſhall abide in his Love*, and that He will give to them that hear his Voice, *eternal Life*; ſince He has ſaid, that they who know his Precepts, ſhall be *happy if they do* them; that He who *hath his Commandments* and *keepeth them*, is *one that loveth Him, and He ſhall be beloved of the Father, and I will love Him*; *that if any Man loveth me, He will keep my Sayings*, and *the Father will love Him, and we will come unto Him and make our abode with Him*, John xiv. 21, 23. it muſt be certain that they who yield ſincere Obedience to his Laws, ſhall be for ever happy. Now what can be conceived neceſſary to the Performance of this Obedience, beſides ſufficient Power to do what is commanded, and the moſt ſtrong and powerful Inducements to engage us ſo to do? ſeeing the firſt muſt make us able, the ſecond muſt be ſufficient to make us willing to do what is required of us. Since therefore it is certain, that a juſt and gracious Lawgiver, cannot require us on pain of his ſevere Diſpleaſure, to do what

what He will not enable us to perform; and ſince it is as certain, that the Promiſe of eternal Life, *i. e.* the Promiſe of the greateſt and moſt laſting Bleſſing that we can enjoy, muſt be ſufficient to make us willing to do what we are able; it muſt be alſo certain, that the divine Aſſiſtance which God will certainly afford to All that do ſincerely ask it, that they may be *ſtrengthned in the inward Man, to do his Will*, and that a firm Aſſurance of that eternal Life, which He hath promiſed to them, that do ſo, muſt be all that is neceſſary to the Performance of that Obedience, to which Chriſt hath annex'd the Promiſe of eternal Happineſs. Agreeably to this, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, this is the *Word of Faith that we Preach, that if thou ſhalt confeſs with thy Mouth,* Κύριον Ἰησοῦν that *Jeſus is the Lord, and ſhalt believe in thy Heart, that God hath raiſed Him from the Dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved*, Rom. x. 8, 9. Becauſe by owning Him as our Lord, we own our Obligation to yield Obedience to his Commands: (For *why*, ſaith He, *call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the Things which I ſay?*) And the Belief of his Reſurrection affords the higheſt Motives to perform it; *we being*, ſaith *St.* Peter, 1 Ep. i. 3. *begotten by his Reſurrection from the Dead*, to *a lively Hope of an Inheritance incorrupti-*

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ble undefiled that fadeth not away, reſerved in the Heavens for us. To this Effect, are theſe Words of the Excellent Biſhop *Uſher*; "In one of the *Apoſtles* ordinary Sermons, we ſee there "was ſo much Matter delivered, as was "ſufficient to convert Men to the Faith, "and to make them capable of Baptiſm; "and thoſe Sermons treated only of the "firſt Principles of the Doctrine of "Chriſt:" Of this we have two ſignal Inſtances in the *Acts of the Apoſtles*; the firſt is in St. *Peter*'s Sermon to the *Jews*, in which He firſt *tells* them, that *Jeſus of Nazareth was a Man demonſtrated to them*, to be the promiſed *Meſſiah*, by *the mighty Works, Miracles, and Signs which God did by Him, in the midſt of them*, Acts ii. 22. That *this Jeſus God raiſed from the Dead*, and that he being exalted to *the right Hand of* God, *and having receiv'd from the Father the Promiſe of the Holy Spirit*, mentioned by *Joel* the *Prophet*, *had ſhed Him forth on his Diſciples*; (33, 34,) *Let therefore*, ſaith He, *all the Houſe of Iſrael know aſſuredly, that God hath made this Jeſus, whom ye crucified, Lord and Chriſt*; (36) and then it follows (41) *that they who gladly received his Words, were baptized, and ſo were added to the Church*, and ſtiled τὺς σωζομένους *the Saved*. (47). A like Inſtance

Sermon of the Unity of the Church, p. 20.

Inſtance we find in his Sermon to *Cornelius*, and his Kinſmen, in which He ſaith, *They knew the Word preached concerning Jeſus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Ghoſt, and with Power, who went about doing Good, and healing All that were poſſeſſed of the Devil*, becauſe *God was with Him*; Acts x. 38. (2*dly*) *that God hath raiſed Him from the Dead the third Day*; (40). (3*dly*) that *He was Lord of All*, (all Power in Heaven and Earth being given to Him, as He ſaith after his Reſurrection;) that *God commanded the Apoſtles to preach, and to teſtify to the People, that it was He that was ordained of God, to be the Judge of Quick and Dead*; and laſtly, *that by Faith in his Name, whoſoever believed in Him, ſhould receive Remiſſion of Sins*; and then it follows, that *the Holy Ghoſt fell on All them that heard theſe Words*, and they were inſtantly *baptized*. And the *Jews* which contended with St. *Peter*, for converſing with them, were forced to confeſs, that *God had granted to the Gentiles Repentance unto Life*. Acts xi. 18.

(2) Hence it doth follow, that no good Man can be an *Heretick*, in the *Scripture* Senſe, and the true Import of the Word. If indeed you will call them *Hereticks*, who differ from the Decrees of ſome *Councils* called *General*, or from the *doctri-*

doctrinal Traditions which prevailed in ſome Ages of the Church, becauſe they had been ſo determin'd by thoſe Councils, you may load many good Men with this Name of Infamy; but St. *Paul* hath taught us, that *an Heretick ſins, being condemned of his own Conſcience*, Tit. iii. 10. He therefore who only believes, what his beſt Reaſon after a diligent Search, and the Uſe of all proper Means, conceiveth to be true, may be aſſur'd He is none of St. *Paul*'s *Hereticks*. Nor can a good Man be a *Heretick* in the *Scripture* Senſe, ſeeing that reckons *Hereſies* among thoſe Works of the Fleſh which are *manifeſt*, and which *they that do, ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God*, Gal. v. 19, 20, 21. "If we re-

Liberty of Prophe-ſying.

"member, ſaith Biſhop *Taylor*, that St. "*Paul* reckons *Hereſie* among the Works "of the Fleſh, and ranks it with all "manner of practical Impieties, we ſhall "eaſily perceive, that if a Man mingles "not a Vice with his Opinion, if He be "innocent in his Life, tho' deceiv'd in "his Doctrine, his Error is his Miſery "not his Crime; and if any ſhall ſay "otherwiſe, it is to ſay that ſome Men "ſhall be damned, when they cannot "help it, and be miſerable for ever, be-"cauſe of their Unhappineſs to be de-"ceived thro' their own Simplicity, and

"natural,

" natural, or accidental, but inculpable " Infirmity." And did Men ſeriouſly Conſider that Ἀφιλάγαθοι, 2 *Tim.* iii. 3. *they that Love not good Men* are ranked among the worſt of Men, they would be more concerned to love all thoſe whom they in Charity are bound to hope well of, notwithſtanding any Difference from us in their Sentiments: And therefore to mitigate our hatred of thoſe whom we call *Schiſmaticks*, conſider (1) in the new Teſtament I find not this Word ever applied to them, who only ſeparate from the external Communion of the *Eſtabliſh'd Church.* The Word *Schiſm* is only us'd in the *Goſpel* of St. *John*, and in the *firſt Epiſtle to the Church of Corinth.* In the *Goſpel of* St. John, it only ſignifies that Difference of Sentiments, which was among the *Jews* concerning *Chriſt*, ſome ſaying *that He was a good Man*, others that *He was a Deceiver of the People*, and *could not be of God, becauſe He kept not the Sabbath.* And about this χίζμα ἦν ἐν Αὐτοῖς, *there was*, ſaith He, *a Schiſm among them.* Now tho' there be no ſuch *Schiſms* among us, yet are we χιζόμενοι divided into Parties as much as they, concerning the divine Nature, and the Satisfaction of Chriſt, his Preſence in the Sacrament, and the Oblation of Him as a Sacrifice to God, in the Celebration of the Euchariſt. In the

the 1*ſt*. Chapter to the *Corinthians*, 10, 11, 13, Verſes, it plainly ſignifies a Difference of Perſons of the ſame *Church* and Communion in their Opinions, and Sentiments, cauſing Strifes and Contentions among them. His Words are theſe, I exhort you, Brethren, that you all *ſpeak the ſame Thing*, Καὶ μὴ ἦ ἐν ὑμῖν σχίσματα, *and that there be no Schiſms among you; for it hath been declared to me, that there are* ἔριδες *Strifes and Contentions among you:* If then there be a Schiſm where all do not *ſpeak the ſame Thing*, but Men ſtrive and earneſtly contend for their different Opinions, can it well be denied that there are St. *Paul*'s *Schiſms* even among us of the Communion of the *Church* of *England*? and are we not then concern'd in St. *Paul*'s Queſtion to that Church; *whilſt there is Strife, Envy, and Contention among you, are you not Carnal?* He, Verſe 12*th*, makes it a further Evidence of their *Schiſms*, that one Party ſaid *I am of Paul*, and another *I am of Apollo*, and, a third *I am of Cephas*, and to this too plainly anſwers our Diviſions into *High-Church*, and *Low-Church*, into *Whig* and *Tory*, and renders us concerned to anſwer the *Apoſtles* Queſtions, *when one ſaith I am of Paul, another I am of Apollo, are ye not carnal:* Now ſhould they of *High Church*, damn *Low Church*, or *Whig*

Whig Tories, to the Pit of Hell; would not both be highly uncharitable? And ſo I fear are they, who damn all, who upon the Account of ſome few Rites and Ceremonies, do ſeparate from the *External Communion* of our Church. For tho' it muſt be granted, that they are guilty of a criminal Schiſm by ſeparating from our External Communion, without juſt Cauſe, yet can we not pronounce them damned *Schiſmaticks* on this Account, unleſs we can be ſure that they do this out of Obſtinacy, and againſt the Dictates of their Conſcience, and cannot do it purely from the Prejudices of their Education, the Weakneſs of their Judgments, or unwilling Ignorance.

(3.) Hence it demonſtratively follows, that we ſtand bound in Conſcience, to live in Peace, Union, and *Chriſtian* Charity with all good *Chriſtians*, and with all *Chriſtian* Churches, who believe and Practiſe all that is neceſſary to be believed or done in order to Salvation, and exact no Conditions of Communion from us, which are not inconſiſtent with keeping a good Conſcience, and leading a good Life.

For is He not a bold Man, who dares deny Communion with them who hold Communion with God the Father and the Son; or to look on them as unfit for his

his Communion on Earth, whom God will admit to the Enjoyment of himſelf in Heaven; or who refuſeth to live at Peace with them, who have Peace with God; or to own them as his Friends and *Chriſtian* Brethren, who are Children of God, and Friends of Chriſt; or to be united to them in Charity, who are united by his *Holy Spirit* to their Head *Chriſt Jeſus?* Is this agreeable to theſe Words of the Apoſtle, *Let not him that eateth, deſpiſe him that eateth not, nor let him that eateth not, condemn him that eateth, for God hath received him?* Rom. xiv. 3. Now remarkable to this Purpoſe are the Words of Biſhop *Uſher*; as to the *Agenda* or Things neceſſary to be done in order to Salvation, "Among all "the great Differences we ſee in the Prac- "tice among Chriſtians, there are certain "fundamental Principles in which they all "concur; as a Deſire to fear God's Name, "Repentance for Sins paſt, and a ſincere "Purpoſe of Heart for the time to come to "cleave unto the Lord, which whoſoever "hath, is under Mercy, and may not be "excluded from the Communion of "Saints:" And for the *Credenda* or Things neceſſary to be believed, He ſaith, "The "Creed called the *Apoſtles* contain'd "all the Articles of that kind, as is "manifeſt from the continual Pra- "ctice of the Catholick Church. For "when

Ibid p. 15, 17, 28.

'when she prepared her *Catechumini* 'for Baptism, and by that Door receiv'd 'them into the Congregation of *Christ*'s 'Flock, we cannot rationally conceive 'she omitted any Thing which was ne-'cessary to make one a Member of the 'Church, and yet all that she requir'd them 'to believe, is an Acknowledgment of the 'Articles of this Creed.' And with this agrees the Doctrine of the *Church* of *England*. For she requires those that are baptised only to make *Confession of this Faith*, and in her *Catechism* declares, that these are *all the Articles of the Christian Faith*. Hence the judicious Mr. *Chilling-worth* makes these two Inferences. (1.) 'That what Man or Church soever be-'lieves this Creed, and the evident Con-'sequences of it, sincerely, cannot pos-'sibly be in any Error of simple Belief 'which is offensive to God, nor can de-'serve for any such Error to be cut off 'from the Communion of the Church, or 'the Hope of Salvation. (2.) That what-'ever Man or Church doth, for any 'Error of simple Belief, deprive any 'Man, who sincerely believes this Creed, 'and the evident Consequences of it, 'of his Life, Livelihood, or Liberty, or 'of the Churches Communion, or the 'Hope of Salvation, is for the First unjust, 'cruel and tyrannical, schismatical,

Chap. 4. *Sect.* 13. p. 151.

'preſumptuous, and uncharitable for
'the Second. The good Biſhop, adds,
'That if at this Day, we ſhould take a
'Survey of all the ſeveral Profeſſions of
'Chriſtianity, that have any large Spread
'in any Part of the World, and ſhould
'put by the Points in which they differ
'from one another, and gather together
'the reſt of the Articles in which they
'all do generally agree; we ſhall find
'that in thoſe Propoſitions, which with-
'out Controverſie are univerſally re-
'ceiv'd in the whole Chriſtian World, ſo
'much Truth is contain'd, as being
'join'd with Holy Obedience, may be
'ſufficient to bring a Man to everlaſting
Ibid. Sect. 39. 40. *p.* 161. 'Salvation. Now, ſaith Mr. *Chilling-*
worth, this is as great and as good a
'Truth, and as neceſſary for theſe
'miſerable Times, as can poſſibly be
'utter'd: For this is certain, that to re-
'duce *Chriſtians* to unity of Communion,
'there are but two Ways, which may
'be conceiv'd probable, the one by
'taking away Diverſity of Opinions con-
'cerning Matters of Religion, the other
'by ſhewing that the Diverſity of Opi-
'nions, which is among the ſeveral Sects
'of Chriſtians, ought to be no Hindrance
'to their Unity in Communion. Now
'the former of theſe is not to be hoped
'for without a Miracle, unleſs it could

'be

'be made evident to all Men, that God 'hath appointed some *visible Judge of* 'Controversies, to whose Judgment all 'Men are bound to submit themselves. 'What then remains, but that the other 'Way be taken, and *Christians* must be 'taught to set a greater Value upon 'those high Points of Faith and Obedience, 'in which they agree, than in those 'Matters of less Moment, wherein they 'differ; and understand, that Agreement 'in these ought to be more effectual to 'join them in one Communion, than their 'Differences in other Things of less 'Moment, to divide them. When I say 'in one Communion, I mean in a com-'mon Profession of those Articles of 'Faith, wherein all consent; a joint 'Worship of God after such a Way, as 'all esteem lawful, and a mutual Per-'formance of all those Works of Charity, 'which *Christians* owe to one another. 'And to such a Communion, what better 'Inducement could be thought of, than 'to demonstrate, that was universally 'believed by all *Christians*, if it were 'joined with a love of Truth, and holy 'Obedience, was sufficient to bring Men 'to Heaven? For why should Men be 'more rigid than God? why should any 'Error exclude any Man from the *Church*'s *Communion*, which will not

'deprive Him of Salvation?' In a Word, either it muſt be own'd, that the frequent and vehement Exhortations recorded in the New Teſtament, to *follow after Peace, Union, Charity*, and Edification of our ſelves, εἰς ἓν *into one*, are impracticable, and if ſo, we cannot be oblig'd to obey them; or if no other Way of Concord can be aſſign'd, we muſt own this to be the true and beſt Expedient, to comply with the *Apoſtle*'s Exhortation; 2 *Tim.* ii. 22. *To follow after Righteouſneſs, Holineſs, Faith, Peace, and Charity, with all that call upon the Lord from a pure Heart.* And if ſo, let us thus be at Peace among our ſelves, and the God of Love and Peace ſhall be with us.

SER-

SERMON VII.

JUDE. 3.—

When I gave all Diligence to write unto you of the common Salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and to exhort you, that ye ſhould earneſtly contend for the Faith, which was once delivered unto the Saints.

1. FROM theſe Words obſerve, that the Word *Saints* in the New Teſtament, is as large as the Word *Chriſtians*, they being *Saints called*, who *in every Place call upon the Name of the Lord* Jeſus, 1 *Cor.* i. 1. In the

Acts of the Apoſtles, St. *Peter* is ſaid to go down to *the Saints* at *Lydda*; and to preſent *Tabitha alive to the Saints*; and *Saul* is ſaid to have done much *Evil to the Saints*; and to have caſt *many of the Saints into Priſon*; and in the *Epiſtle* to the *Church of Corinth*, Contribution to the Want of *Chriſtians*, is ſtill called Contribution to the Neceſſity of the *Saints*. *Acts*. ix. 13, 32, 41. *Rom* 15. 26. 2. 2 *Cor*. 8. 4. ix. 1. 12.

2. Obſerve, that the Faith neceſſary to be believed by all *Chriſtians*, was already in St. *Jude's* Time delivered to all *Chriſtians*, and ſo muſt be incapable of any Addition to it afterwards.

In Proſecution of this important Subject, I ſhall lay down ſome Propoſitions.

Prop. 1. *That the Articles abſolutely Neceſſary to be believed in order to Salvation, muſt be few in Number, and ſuch as are in Nature plain and eaſie to be underſtood by all Chriſtians.* For God being *willing that all Men ſhould be ſaved, and come to the Knowledge of the Truth*, muſt be as willing to impart to them the Knowledge of thoſe Things, which are neceſſary to be known in order to their Salvation. Chriſt being the common Saviour of all Men, he muſt have provided Means ſufficient for the Salvation of all them, to whom

whom his Gospel was revealed. He having given to his *Apostles* Commission to *preach the Gospel to every Creature*, capable of hearing, and embracing it, and having said, that *they who did believe it, should be saved*, and *He that believed it not, should be damned*; must have obliged and assisted them so to preach it, that every one that heard it, might fully learn all that was necessary to be by them believed to Salvation. Since otherwise, the Promise of their Salvation must depend on a Condition impossible to be known, and Unbelievers must be damned, for what they could not know to be their Duty to believe. Seeing then God truly wills, that weak and unlearned People should be saved, the Rule for their obtaining this Salvation must be, as St. *Austin* saith, *Pusillis Magnisq; Communis, common to Small and Great*, to the Unlearned as well as the Learned; and therefore must have only such necessary Articles of *Christian* Faith, as are both few, and easie to be understood, (because the Busk of common People, are of slow and mean Capacities, and of short Memories, and therefore are not capable of apprehending Things obscure, or remembring many simple Articles of Faith,) that having through the whole Tenour of their Lives occasions to exercise the Epist. 57.

moral Duties of *Chriſtianity*, they may the better apprehend and remember them, they being generally ſuch Rules, as are all built upon, and only do improve thoſe Principles of Juſtice, Gratitude, and Humanity, which are implanted in their Natures. Accordingly we find both *Chriſt*, and his *Apoſtles*, contracting the neceſſary Articles of Faith into a very little Compaſs For our Lord having ſaid unto his Father, *Thou haſt given me Power over all Fleſh, that I ſhould give eternal Life to thoſe whom thou haſt given me*; He immediately adds, *this is Life eternal*, i. e. this is the Condition of, or the true Way to attain this Life; *that they know thee to be the only true God, and know Jeſus Chriſt to be the Prophet, whom thou haſt ſent*, to reveal the Conditions of obtaining this Life. *John.* xvii. 2, 3. The Obſervation of St. *Cyprian* upon which Words, is this, "That Chriſt "by ſpeaking ſo, has made a great "Abridgment of his Precepts; that in "the celeſtial Diſcipline, the Memory "of the Learners might not be over-"charg'd, but that they might ſoon learn, "*Quod eſſet Simplici Fidei Neceſſarium.*"

De orat dominica, p. 151.

St. *Peter* in his firſt Sermon to the *Jews* declares, that *Jeſus of Nazareth was a Man, demonſtrated to them to be the promiſed Meſſiah, by the mighty Signs, and*

Miracles

Miracles which God did by Him in their Sight; Acts ii. 22. That *this Jeſus God had raiſed from the Dead, and that He being exalted to the right Hand of God, and having received from the Father, the Promiſe of the Holy Spirit*, (mentioned by the *Prophet* Joel) *had ſhed Him forth on his Diſciples*; (33, 34) *Let therefore*, ſaith He, *all the Houſe of Iſrael aſſuredly know*, that *God hath made that Jeſus, whom ye crucified, Lord and Chriſt.* (36) and then it follows, (41) that *they who gladly receiv'd theſe Words, were baptized*, and ſo were added to the Church, οἱ σωζόμενοι *the Saved*. On which, and ſuch like Paſſages in the *Acts* of the *Apoſtles*, *Arch-Biſhop Uſher* makes this Obſervation; 'That in one of the *Apoſtles* 'ordinary Sermons, which treated only 'of the firſt Principles of the Oracles of 'Chriſt, we ſee there was ſo much 'Matter delivered, as was ſufficient to 'convert Men to the Faith, and to make 'them capable of Baptiſm.' St. *Paul* delivers the Faith, which the *Apoſtles* preached, in theſe Words; *The Righteouſneſs which is of Faith ſpeaketh on this wiſe, the Word is nigh thee, even in thy Mouth and in thy Heart. This is the Word of Faith which we preach, that if thou ſhalt confeſs with thy Mouth the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe in thy Heart,*

Heart, that God hath raiſed Him from the Dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved. For with the Heart this is believed to Juſtification, Rom. 10. 8, 9, 10. *and with the Mouth Confeſſion is made (of this Faith) unto Salvation*; in his Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, He ſpeaks to them thus, *I have made known to you the Goſpel which I preached to you, which alſo you have received, and in which you have ſtood* Καὶ δι' οὗ σῴζεσθε *and by which you are ſaved, if you keep in memory the Goſpel I have preached to you. For I have delivered to you, that which I have received, that Chriſt died for our Sins, that He was buried, and that He roſe again the third Day according to the Scriptures,* 1 Cor. xv. 1, 2, 3, 4. And laſtly, He giveth us the entire Myſtery of Godlineſs in theſe Words; *God was manifeſted in the Fleſh, juſtified in the Spirit, ſeen of Angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the World, received up into Glory.* 1 Tim. iii. 16.

The Creeds which all the Fathers of the three firſt Centuries have delivered to us, as the entire Faith of thoſe Ages, received from the *Apoſtles*, are alſo both comparatively ſhort, and plain, and evidently contained in the *Holy Scriptures*. *The Church diffuſed throughout the World,* Lib. 1 cap. 2. cap. 3. & p. 44. ſaith *Irenæus*; *receiv'd from the Apoſtles, and their Diſciples, the Faith which is in*

one

one God, the Father Almighty, who made Heaven and Earth, the Sea and all that therein is; and in one Chriſt Jeſus, incarnate for our Salvation; and in the Holy Ghoſt, who by the Prophets declar'd the Diſpenſations, and the Adventſ, the Generation from the Virgin, the Paſſion, the Reſurrection from the Dead, and the Aſſumption in the Fleſh of the beloved Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, and his Coming from Heaven in the Glory of the Father, to recapitulate all Things, and to raiſe again the Fleſh of all Men. That to Chriſt Jeſus, our Lord, and God, and Saviour, and King, (according to the good Pleaſure of the inviſible Father) every Knee ſhould bow, of Things in *the Earth, and under the Earth, and every Tongue ſhould confeſs to Him. And that He ſhould do juſt Judgment to All, and ſhould ſend into everlaſting Fire, the ſpiritual Wickedneſſes, the tranſgreſſing and apoſtate Angels, the ungodly, unjuſt, the wicked and blaſphemous Perſons; but to the Juſt, the Holy, and the Obſervers of his Laws; or to thoſe who either from the Beginning perſevere in his Love, or return to Him by Repentance, He might confer Incorruption, and eternal Glory, giving to them everlaſting Life. This Creed,* ſaith He, the Church hath received, παρὰ τῶν Ἀποστόλων *from the Apoſtles,* and diſtributes to her Children

Children that this is the indeclinable Rule of Truth, receiv'd by *Chriſtians* at their Baptiſm, the one and only Truth, deliver'd by the *Apoſtles*, and preach'd, taught, and delivered in all Churches throughout the whole World; and ſo uniformly believed, as if they had but one Mouth, one Soul, and Heart. That He, who among the Governours of the Church, was the moſt able Speaker, cou'd ſay no more; ſince none of them was above his Maſter, nor could He, who was infirm in Speech, ſay leſs. For the Faith being one and the ſame, neither could He, who was moſt able to ſpeak of it, exceed; nor He, that was leaſt able to ſpeak of it diminiſh from it.

De præſcript Cap. 13, 14. De virgin. velandis, Cap. 1.

'The Rule of Faith, ſaith *Tertullian*, 'is entirely one immovable, and unreformable, *viz.* That of believing in one 'only God, Omnipotent, the Creator of 'the World; and in his Son Jeſus Chriſt, 'born of the Virgin *Mary*, crucified 'under Pontius Pilate, riſing again the 'third Day, received into Heaven, ſitting 'at the right Hand of God, and ſending thence the Holy Spirit, and who 'ſhall come again with Glory, to advance his Saints to the Enjoyment of 'eternal Life, and his celeſtial Promiſes, 'and to adjudge the Prophane to perpetual Fire, after He hath raiſed all Fleſh 'from the Dead.' This, ſaith He, is

'a

a Rule *inſtituted*, by Chriſt, and delivered to the Church, by the Tradition of the *Apoſtles*; a Rule which admits of no Correction, and is deficient in nothing, becauſe having once believed this, *Nihil Deſideramus ultra Credere* we deſire not to believe more. For this we firſt believe, that we ought to believe nothing more. It laſtly is that Rule of Faith, which brings Salvation! The like Creeds we find in *Origen*'s Book *De Principiis*, and in the *Apoſtolical Conſtitutions*, under the Name of the *Apoſtolical Predication*, l. v. c. xi. And again at the time of Baptiſm l. vii. c. xli. In fine, hence appears the Truth of the Obſervation that the *Apoſtles Creed*, (even when it wanted the Article *of the Deſcent into Hell*, and the *Communion of Saints*) contained all Things delivered by the *Apoſtles*, as neceſſary to be believed to Salvation. For if a Creed ſo like to that, which at preſent bears that Name, was by the *Apoſtles*, and their immediate Succeſſors, delivered to all *Chriſtian* Churches, as the invariable Rule of Truth, and this Creed was preſerved alike in all Churches, without Addition, Diminution, or Correction, as being taught *per Prædicationem Apoſtolicam*; if all *Chriſtians* were received into the Church by Baptiſm, upon Profeſſion of this *Creed*, and it was thought ſufficient

ſufficient Preſcription, againſt any Doctrine preached by the *Heretick*, that it was not to be found in the Church's Creed; then it demonſtrably follows, both from the Nature of the Thing, and the Tradition of the *Church* of theſe three Ages, that in the Symbol then in uſe, was contain'd all that the *Apoſtles* delivered, as ſimply neceſſary to be believed by all *Chriſtians*, and all that the whole *Catholick Church* then judg'd needful to be held, in point of Faith.

For is it reaſonable to conceive, that the *Apoſtles*, and the *Apoſtolick Churches*, would omitt any *Fundamental* Point in that *Creed*, which they delivered to be received by all Churches, as that Rule of Faith, which would admit neither of Diminution or Addition, and of which *Origen* ſpeaketh thus, We ought to know this, that the Apoſtles preaching the Faith of Chriſt, did manifeſtly deliver, even to thoſe who were moſt ſlow in acquiſition of divine Knowledge, *Quæcunq; Neceſſaria Crediderunt omnibus Credentibus?* What Account can be given, why any ſuch Summary of Faith ſhould be made at all by the *Apoſtles*, and delivered to all *Churches* planted by them, but for this End, that in it all the neceſſary Articles of *Chriſtian* Faith might be compriſed? If a Creed were, ſuitably

Proem de principiis,

ſuitably to this Tradition, delivered by the *Apoſtles* to all *Chriſtian Churches*, either we muſt think the *Apoſtles* unfaithful in their Work, or this *Creed* an unfaithful Account of their Doctrine, or that it contained all Things neceſſary to be believed by *Chriſtians*. To imagine it was otherwiſe, is in effect to ſay, this is not the *Apoſtles Creed*, but a part of it, and that they deal deceitfully with *Chriſtians*, in delivering that to them, as a *Symbol of Faith*, which was indeed no *Symbol*, as being no diſtinctive Mark of the ſound *Chriſtian* from the *Heretick*, which, ſay the *Ancients*, this Symbol was deſign'd to be.

Prop. 2. Hence it demonſtrably follows, that theſe Creeds before mention'd, muſt be a perfect Summary of all Things neceſſary to be believed now, and throughout all ſucceeding Ages of the World. For how can it be neceſſary for any *Chriſtian*, to have more in his Creed, than the *Apoſtles* delivered to be believed by all *Chriſtians*, and the *Chriſtians* of the three firſt Centuries believed? Can the Churches of future Ages make the narrow Way to Life more narrow, than our *Saviour* and his *Apoſtles* made it? When the whole Church hath ſo expreſsly taught for three whole Centuries, that this Faith was ſufficient for the perfect Knowledge

Knowledge of the Truth, and that in it nothing was deficient, may others come after them, and by adding other Articles to it, pronounce it inſufficient? What Reaſon can any Man aſſign, why any Perſon ſhould not be ſaved now, by the ſame Faith, which was ſufficient for Salvation in the Days of the *Apoſtles*, and the *three firſt Ages?* Are we wiſer than they, or were the Doctors of the ſucceeding Ages more knowing, or more faithful? Is there another Covenant made with the Church ſince their Days, or are other Terms of Salvation ſince made, or is God leſs merciful to us, than He was to them? or muſt it not hence follow, that there can be no new Article, no Obligation to believe any Thing, that was not always Matter of the *Chriſtian* Faith, ſince the beginning of a *Chriſtian Church?*

Now the Uſes of what hath been diſcours'd on theſe two Heads, are of ſo great Importance to the informing of our Judgments aright, and the preſerving that *Chriſtian* Love and Charity towards our Brethren, which is as neceſſary to Salvation, as any Article of Faith; that I do earneſtly deſire all that hear me, to attend unto them. And 1. If the Things neceſſary to be believed to Salvation, be only few and eaſy to be underſtood; hence you

you may reſt aſſur'd, that if you hear of any Creed, containing very many Articles, compriz'd in *cramp Words*, of the true Senſe of which the wiſeſt and moſt learned Doctors cannot yet agree, you may be certain that ſuch a Creed, cannot be neceſſary to Salvation; becauſe the Articles contain'd in it, are neither few, nor are they eaſy to be underſtood; there is but little of them contained in the Creed of the *Apoſtles*, and the three Primitive Ages of the Church, and ſo there can be nothing in them neceſſary to be believed, more than what is plainly comprehended in thoſe Creeds. In vain do Men endeavour to palliate this Matter, by this ſpecious Pretence, that *tho' the Church can make no Articles of Faith, which never were revealed by the Apoſtles, ſhe may declare the true Senſe of thoſe, which need ſufficient Declaration.* For is it not abſurd to ſay, what always was believed wanted ſufficient Declaration, that is, It wanted what is neceſſary, to render it an Article of Faith, or a Thing fit to be believ'd? Is it not highly derogatory, from the Wiſdom of the *Apoſtles*, and of that Spirit which inſpir'd them, to ſay, They taught Things abſolutely neceſſary to be believ'd in order to Salvation, ſo obſcurely, as that they needed a further Declaration to obtain that End?

Did the *Apoſtles* know that Article which wants, ſay they, ſufficient Declaration to be a neceſſary Article of *Chriſtian* Faith, wanting a further Declaration, or did they not? If they did not know it ſo to be, how came their Succeſſors, without a new Revelation, to know what they knew not? If they did know it to be neceſſary, either they declar'd it ſo to be, and then what further Declaration could it need? If they did not conceive it neceſſary, and therefore did not deliver it to the Church as ſuch, why may not others do ſo, and not afflict, and clogg the Faith of *Chriſtians*, with unneceſſary Things? Again, Did theſe three Ages which aſſerted the Perfection of theſe Creeds, as to all Fundamentals of the *Chriſtian* Faith, know the true Senſe of them, or did they not? If they did not; they believed, taught, and preached, they knew not what. If they did know the true Senſe of what they daily taught and preach'd, they could want no Declaration of the Senſe of what they knew already. In a word, to ſay that the Creed, which paſſeth under the Name of *Athanaſius*, is an Explication of the Senſe of the *Apoſtles* Creed, is in effect to affirm, that a Creed which is intricate, and not intelligible by the wiſeſt of Men, is an Explication of

of a Creed plain, and eaſie to be underſtood.

Prop. 3. Hence it is evident, that *No general Council can by their Definitions, make any new Article of Faith, or make that neceſſary to be believ'd now, which was not ſo before.* For there neither was, nor could be any *general Council*, before the Time of *Conſtantine*, i. e. before the 4th *Century*, long before which Time the Faith of *Chriſtians* neceſſary to be believ'd to Salvation, was compleatly taught by the *Apoſtles*, and receiv'd by all *Chriſtian Churches*. Hence ſaith the xxi *ſt. Article* of our *Church*, *General Councils may err, and ſometimes have erred, even in Things, pertaining to God. Wherefore Things ordained by them, as neceſſary to Salvation, have neither Strength, nor Authority, until it may be declar'd, that they be taken out of Holy Scripture.* This by *Biſhop Stillingfleet* is thus demonſtrated; 'A Church being only a Combination of Men together, on the Belief of ſuch Doctrines, as are neceſſary to Salvation, and the Performance of thoſe Acts of Worſhip, which are ſuitable thereto; it of neceſſity doth ſuppoſe, in order to it's Being, the Belief of thoſe Things which are neceſſary to Salvation; and therefore to aſſert, that the Church hath a Power to make Things neceſſary to Salva-

Rational Account, Chap. 2. p. 53, 54.

'Salvation, is not only abſurd, but de-
'ſtructive to the Being of that Church.
'For when it offer'd to define any Thing,
'as neceſſary, which was not neceſſary be-
'fore, was it a Church or no? If it was a
'Church, it believed all Things neceſſary,
'and if it believ'd all Things neceſſary
'before it defin'd; how comes it to make
'more Things neceſſary by it's Definitions?'

Prop. 4. Hence it is evident, that *there can be no new Hereſie, ſince the firſt Age and Being of the Catholick Church.* For ſeeing a *Hereſie* —— truly and properly ſo called, is a Doctrine that is contrary to, and deſtructive of ſome neceſſary Article of *Chriſtian* Faith; 'tis evident that if there can be *no new Article of Faith*, there can be no new *Hereſie*. Now that there can be no new Article of Faith, *i. e*, no Article which was not always receiv'd as ſuch by the *Catholick Church*, is evident: For ſince neceſſary Articles of Faith, are ſuppos'd to be ſo antecedently to the Being of the *Catholick Church*; ſince the *Catholick Church*, doth ſuppoſe the acknowledgment of all Things neceſſary to be believ'd; it is but reaſonable to admit nothing as neceſſary, but what appears to have been ſo univerſally, and conſequently to reject nothing as *Hereſie*, but what is evidently repugnant to what was always own'd as neceſſary.

Prop.

Prop. 5. Hence it doth evidently follow, *that no Man who doth believe thoſe Articles, which were believed by the Catholick Church, for the firſt three Centuries, and the plain Doctrines contain'd in them, or evidently deduc'd from them, can deſerve to be called an Heretick, or deſerve to be excluded from the Communion of Chriſtians, or from the Union of the Body of Chriſt, for not believing any other ſimple Article of Faith.* Partly becauſe He believes all that the *Catholick Church* thought neceſſary to the Being of a Member, and upon the Belief of which, ſhe admitted All into the Church by *Baptiſm:* And partly, becauſe ſuch a Perſon cannot be guilty of an *Hereſie*, or of a Doctrine ſubverſive of the Faith neceſſary to be believ'd by all *Chriſtians.* To this effect are theſe Words of Biſhop *Stillingfleet*; 'The Union of the Catholick 'Church depends on the Agreement of 'it, in making the Foundations of it's 'Being, the Ground of it's Union. For 'the Unity being intended to preſerve 'the Being, there can be no Reaſon 'given why the Bounds of it's Union 'ſhould extend beyond the Foundation 'of it's Being; which is the owning the 'Things neceſſary to the Salvation of 'All. Whence it neceſſarily follows, 'that whatſoever Church impoſes the *Ibid.*

'Belief of other Things as neceſſary to 'Salvation, which were not ſo ante- 'cedently neceſſary to the Being of the 'Catholick Church, doth as much as in it 'lies break the Unity of it.' From this Aſſertion, ſaith Mr. *Chillingworth*, 'that 'the *Apoſtles Creed* containeth all Things 'neceſſary to be believed unto Salvation, 'may be deduced a Corollary, which if 'it were embraced, cannot but in all 'Reaſon do infinite Service, both to the 'Truth of Chriſt, and to the Peace of '*Chriſtendom*, *viz.* That what Man or 'Church ſoever believes this Creed, and 'all the evident Conſequences of it ſin- 'cerely and heartily, cannot poſſibly, if 'He believes the *Scriptures*, be in any 'Error of ſimple Belief, which is of- 'fenſive to God: Nor therefore deſerve 'for any ſuch Error, to be cut off from 'the Church's Communion, and the 'Hopes of Salvation. And that whatever 'Man or Church, doth for any Error of 'ſimple Belief, deprive a Man ſo quali- 'fi'd of Communion, or ſubject Him to '*Anathemas*, is ſchiſmatical and uncha- 'ritable. Schiſmatical, becauſe He doth 'reject Him from Communion, with- 'out juſt Ground: Uncharitable, be- 'cauſe He doth exclude him from the 'Hopes of Salvation, who is capable 'of Mercy and Acceptance with God.'

Chap. 4. *Sect.* 13. *p.* 151.

Hence

Hence alſo doth it follow; that all thoſe *Romiſh Councils*, which have *anathematiz'd* others, for holding ſuch Doctrines as are well conſiſtent with the firm Belief, of all that is contained in theſe Creeds, or can be plainly inferr'd from any Article of them, have been ſo far from being *Infallible*, that they have actually err'd, and condemned thoſe to eternal Miſery, who are capable of Communion with God here, and of Happineſs with Him hereafter.

Prop. 6. *Nothing ought to be impos'd as a neceſſary Article of Faith to be believ'd, but what may be evidently propounded to all People, as a Thing which God requires them to believe, to the ſaving their Souls*; it being impoſſible to make any Thing appear, to be a neceſſary Article of Faith, but what may not only evidently be prov'd to be reveal'd by God, but that God doth oblige all Men to believe it in order to Salvation. It is not therefore ſufficient to condemn any Perſon as an Unbeliever, that we conceive He doubts of or disbelieves any Thing, which is reveal'd in *Holy Scriptures*, unleſs we can further prove, that God hath in *Scripture* declar'd, the Belief of that Revelation neceſſary to Salvation. For that, without the explicit Belief of

which, we may be ſaved, cannot be neceſſary to Salvation.

From what hath been diſcours'd, we may learn;

(1) That it is not Want of Faith ſufficient, but rather too much Faith, or Pretence of it, which is at preſent, and for a long time hath been the Cauſe, of the Diviſions and the Diſturbances of the *Church of Chriſt*. That which made, and continues the great Rupture between the *Eaſtern* and the *Weſtern* Churches, was this, that the *Weſtern* Churches had added to the *Nicene Creed* the Article of the *Proceſſion of the Holy Ghoſt from the Father and the Son*, which was never in that Creed, till the IXth Century, *i. e.* 500 Years after that Council; it being expreſsly forbidden by the *General Council of* Epheſus, *for any to compoſe, or offer any other Faith to thoſe who became Chriſtians, than that of Nice.* And that which firſt occaſioned, and ſtill continues the unhappy *Schiſm* betwixt the *Papal*, and the *reformed Churches*, is, that to the Apoſtles Creed, they have added as many more Articles, and have declar'd them neceſſary to be believed unto Salvation, and by ſo doing, they have made it neceſſary for us, either to ſeparate from that Church, or to profeſs what we cannot believe, which we can never do, without vile Hypocriſy and the Profeſ-

ſion

ſion of a Lie, and to exclude from our Communion all other Churches of the *Chriſtian* World.

(2) Here is true Ground of Comfort to the weak and ignorant, if upright *Chriſtians*. Amidſt the Quarrels and Contentions which are amongſt the Learned, be of good Comfort, Heaven was not made alone for learned Clerks, but alſo for unlearned Tradeſmen; the *Statutes of the Lord are clear, making wiſe* the *Simple*. The Knowledge therefore which He requires to your Salvation, muſt conſiſt in Matters, which are few, and plain, ſince ſimple Perſons cannot perceive what is obſcure, or in their Memories retain many Things. The neceſſary Articles of their Faith entirely are compris'd in the *Apoſtles Creed*, and that conſiſts of Articles, which may eaſily be remembred, and may be plainly perceived by the meaneſt Underſtanding, and of which any Perſon may be fully convinc'd, that they are written with Clearneſs in the *Holy Scriptures*, which by all *Proteſtants* is own'd as a ſufficient Rule of Faith in all things which it clearly teacheth. If therefore you do heartily believe this *Creed*, and conſcientiouſly apply yourſelves to the Performance of thoſe Duties, which are clearly taught in *Holy Scripture*, you need not be affrighted by

any

any one that ſaith, you ſhall be damned for not believing, or not doing what there you find no good Ground or Reaſon to believe or do. For to be ſure your gracious God will not condemn you for not ſeeing, what is not at all, or only is obſcurely there recorded.

Laſtly, The Belief of theſe Propoſitions will diſpoſe us to preſerve Peace and Charity towards our *Chriſtian* Brethren, throughout the World. 'Tis difficult, if not impoſſible, to preſerve true Brotherly Love to them, whom we exclude from being *Chriſtians*, and ſentence to the Pit of Hell: But if we act according to the Principles of this Diſcourſe, we may keep *Chriſtian* Charity with almoſt the whole *Chriſtian* World. For it is truly ſaid by *Arch-Bp. Uſher*, 'in thoſe Propoſitions 'which without Controverſy are believed 'in the whole Chriſtian World, ſo much 'truly is contained, as being joined with 'Holy Obedience, may be ſufficient to 'bring a Man to everlaſting Salvation. 'And that we have no Cauſe to doubt, 'but that as many as walk according to 'this Rule, neither overthrowing that 'which they have builded, by bringing 'any damnable Hereſies upon it, nor 'otherwiſe corrupting their moſt Holy 'Faith, with a lewd and wicked Converſation

'ſation, Peace ſhall be upon them and 'Mercy, as upon the Iſrael of God.

From what hath been diſcours'd, we may learn, wherein conſiſts that *Unity of Faith*, of which the *Scripture* ſpeaketh.

For 1. That the Church of Chriſt is ſtyled One, by Reaſon of Her Unity in Faith, or that there is *one common Faith* (Titus i. 4.) One like *precious Faith* (2 Pet. i. 1.) the *Scripture* doth aſſure us. There *is one Faith*, ſaith St. *Paul* (Eph. iv. 5.) *An Unity of Faith*, and *of the Knowledge of the Son of God*, to which we muſt all come; (*ver.* 13.) *A Faith once*, and at once *delivered* to *the Saints*, for *which we muſt contend*; (Jude 3.) *A moſt Holy Faith*, in which we muſt build up our Selves; (*v.* 20.) *A Faith of the Goſpel*, for which we are exhorted *to ſtrive as with one Soul*, (Phil. i. 27.) This will be further evident, from all thoſe Places in the New Teſtament, which mention *a Form of ſound Words with Faith and Love.* 2 Tim. i. 13. or of an ὑποτύπωσις, or *a brief Summary of Things which were to be believ'd by All*, of a καλὴ παραθήκη, *a good Depoſitum*, or Summary of Goſpel Doctrine, which muſt be kept, and as agreed on by the *Apoſtles*, to be taught by All, and which are alſo *to be committed to faithful Men, who are able to*

inſtruct

inſtruct others in them; (2 Tim. ii. 2.) which makes mention of *a common Faith* delivered to them by the *Apoſtles*, a Faith once and at once delivered to the Saints; (*Jude* 3.) *an Holy Faith*, in which they were to build up themſelves; (*ver.* 20.) A Faith which they muſt hold in a good Conſcience; (1 *Tim.* i. 19.) A Tradition which they had been taught, and were to keep; (2 *Theſ.* ii. 15.) the Elements of the Oracles of God, the *Word of the Principles of Chriſt*, which even Babes were to be taught; (*Heb.* v. 12. vi. 1.) All which things ſhew, that there were then ſome common Principles of Faith, ſome ſhort and eaſy Syſtem of the Articles of *Chriſtian* Faith, taught uniformly to All, by the Direction of the *Apoſtles*, and univerſally embrac'd by all *Chriſtians*, as the Rule and Meaſure of their Faith. And this was always the Belief of the whole Church of Chriſt, which therefore always had her *Creed*, her Rule, her Symbol of *Chriſtian* Faith, which She requir'd all adult Perſons to learn, profeſs, and own, before they were by Baptiſm admitted into her Communion and Society, and ſo made Members of the *Catholick Church*. The Neceſſity that there ſhould be ſuch an Union of Faith in all the Members of Chriſt's Body, will be evident,

(1)

(1) From the Nature of the Thing; Since without this, we cannot underſtand, what the Belief or the Profeſſion of the *Chriſtian* Faith imports. For we cannot believe *Chriſtianity*, without believing ſuch Articles, as contain the Eſſentials of the *Chriſtian* Faith, the Doctrines in which it doth conſiſt, and by which it is diſtinguiſhed from all other Religions: Nor can we unite in the Belief, and Profeſſion of this Faith, without uniting in the Belief and the Profeſſion of thoſe Articles.

(2) This is ſuppoſed in all thoſe Precepts, which command the *Chriſtians*, not to receive, or *wiſh good Speed* to Him that brings not this Doctrine; (*2 Ep. Joh.* 10.) to reject the *Heretick* after the ſecond Admonition, as knowing that Ἐξέστραπται, He is turned aſide from the Faith, (*Tit.* iii. 10.) not by a total Renunciation of it; ſince then He would be an *Apoſtate*, but by denying or oppoſing of it, in ſome Fundamental; To *mark thoſe who cauſe Diviſions, and Scandals, contrary to the Doctrines which Chriſtians had receiv'd, and avoid them*, (Rom. xvi. 17.) becauſe *they ſerved not the Lord Jeſus, but their own Bellies*; and to withdraw *from ev'ry one, that conſents not to the wholeſome Words of the Lord Jeſus* Chriſt, *and to the Doctrine*

Doctrine which is after Godlineſs; (1 Tim. vi, 3, 5.) to *beware of falſe Prophets* and *Seducers*; (Matth. vii. 15.) to *watch againſt thoſe Wolves, who ſpeak perverſe Things*, to *draw away Diſciples after them.* For all theſe Exhortations and Commands ſuppoſe, that there is ſome *Chriſtian* Doctrine, which muſt of all Men be received, which by diſowning, Men become *Heretics*, and *Overthrowers of the Faith of Chriſt*, and are to be rejected from the Communion of the *Saints.*

Prop. 2. Hence we may learn *wherein the Unity of Faith conſiſts.* For ſince it is proved, that this Unity in Faith, is not to be extended beyond that Faith, in which the Being of the Church is founded, *i. e.* the owning of all Things neceſſary to be believ'd unto Salvation; and ſince it has been alſo prov'd, that the *Creeds* delivered by the *Apoſtles* to all *Chriſtians*, and own'd by them as a compleat Summary of all Things neceſſary to be believed, were fully comprehended in That, which is now called the *Apoſtles*; Hence doth it plainly follow, that that Creed fully doth contain all Things belonging to the Unity of *Chriſtian* Faith.

Moreover, could the *Apoſtles* agree upon This, as a Pattern of what they afterwards ſhould preach, and as a Rule of Faith

Faith to Believers, if it did not contain the whole Council of God in Things ſimply neceſſary to be believed? If ſo; it follows, that they obſerved not their own Rule in preaching of the Goſpel. Seeing they *kept back from the Knowledge of the Faithful, ſomething neceſſary to be believed to their Salvation.* *Laſtly*, it is well known that in the Notion of the *Fathers*, a Rule importeth Fulneſs, and Perfection, even ſuch a Fulneſs as Πάσαν πρόθεσιν καὶ Ἀφαίρεσιν ὑδαμῶς ἐκδέχεται by no Means doth admit of any Diminution, or Addition. That it is Εὐθύτητος ὅρος μήτε προσλόμενος, the Boundary of what is right wanting nothing. So *Chryſoſtom*, *Theodoret*, *Oecumenius*, and *Theophylact*; and could the Fathers then ſo conſtantly have ſtyled any of theſe Creeds the Rule of Faith, had they conceived them deficient, in any neceſſary Part of Chriſtian Doctrine?

(1) Hence we may diſcover the Fallacy the *Romiſh Doctors* put upon us when they argue thus; the *Holy Scripture* teacheth that there is one Faith, one common Faith; now this Faith muſt be either yours, and then we cannot be ſaved without It; or ours, and then you cannnot be ſaved without it. For this one Faith, into which all *Chriſtians* were baptized, contains neither the Doctrines in which they differ from us, nor we

we from them; but only the *Apoſtles* Creed, which we both equally believe, and which the whole Church of God, for many Centuries receiv'd, as a perfect Syſtem of all Things neceſſary to be believ'd in Order to Salvation.

(2) Hence we may eaſily return an Anſwer to that Demand, ſo often made by *Romiſh Doctors*; viz. what Catalogue have you, or can you give us of fundamental Articles of Faith? For here is a Catalogue of them, recommended to the whole *Chriſtian* World, by ſo much Reaſon and Authority, as one ſhould think ſufficient to ſatisfy their Curioſity. Here being Symbols delivered, as containing all the Fundamentals of the Chriſtian Faith, by the Authority of the inſpir'd *Apoſtles*, and received by all *Orthodox Chriſtians*, in all Places for three whole Centuries, as a full Summary, of what was neceſſary to be believ'd by all Chriſtians. Here is, ſaith *Irenæus*, *Regula Indeclinabilis* an invariable Rule, a Rule, which ſay the *Fathers*, admits neither of Diminution nor Addition. Whereas their Catalogue of Fundamentals is ſtill variable, and ſtill encreaſing, ev'ry freſh *Council* which determines any Article of Faith, adding ſome Fundamental to it.

(3) Hence

(3) Hence alſo we return a clear and ſatisfactory Anſwer to that captious Queſtion, ſo often put to Us, viz. *Where was your Church before Luther?* Seeing our Church was then even there, where now it is; to wit, in all Places of the World, where theſe ancient Foundations are retained, and not ſubverted, by introducing Doctrines plainly oppoſite to them, and ſubverſive of them; where theſe common Principles of Faith are held, by the Profeſſion of which Men were admitted by Baptiſm into the Church of Chriſt, there we doubt not, but our Lord had his Subjects, and we our Fellow-Servants. For that which always was believ'd and profeſſed, to be the Summary of Chriſtian Faith, that is moſt properly the Faith of our Church. Hence in our Catechiſm we ſay, this Creed containeth all the Articles of our Faith, and into this alone do we baptize and admit Members into our Communion. We have, it is confeſs'd, other Articles, but they are not impos'd upon any of the Laity; nor are our Clergy oblig'd to aſſent to them, as fundamental Articles; but only, ſaith *Arch-Bp. Laud*, and *Bp. Bramhall*, as *Articles of Peace and Concord*, againſt which they ſhall not preach to the Diſturbance of the Church, but rather ſhall obſerve that Rule of the *Apoſtle*, *Haſt*

thou Faith, have it to thy Self before God. Rom. xiv. 22.

Hence *Laſtly*, may we demonſtrate the Falſehood of the whole Doctrine of the *Church of Rome*, and fully juſtify our Separation from it. Since to this *Creed*, which was delivered by the *Apoſtles*, as the entire Rule of *Chriſtian* Faith, and was received as ſuch by all *Chriſtians* for divers Centuries, She hath not only added twelve more *Articles*, but hath cloſed them with this Addition, " Hæc eſt Fides " Catholica, ſine Qua Salus eſſe non poteſt, *This is the true Catholick Faith, without which no Man can be ſaved*; and ſo She hath incurr'd St *Paul's Anathema*, denounc'd againſt them who *preach another Goſpel*, as hath been fully prov'd in the Sermon on that Text.

Moreover, by doing this, She hath made it abſolutely neceſſary for all that will maintain Communion with Her; (1) To exclude from Salvation all other Churches, *i. e.* the greateſt Part of the whole *Chriſtian* World; and by ſo doing, to be guilty of a great Breach of Charity. (2) She hath alter'd the Conditions of Communion receiv'd in the whole *Chriſtian* World, for above a thouſand Years. And (3) She hath impos'd upon us a Neceſſity of Separation from her Communion

munion, or of profeſſing our Aſſent to all Her new Articles, which, till we are convinc'd that they are truly Articles of *Chriſtian* Faith, we cannot do without vile Hypocriſy, or the Profeſſion of a Lie. (4) She hath impos'd upon us many Things, which we cannot do in Faith; *v. g.* the Uſe of *Prayers to Saints*, *Prayer for the Souls in Purgatory*, *Prayer in an unknown Tongue*, and therefore which we cannot without Sin perform; for *whatſoever is not of Faith, is Sin.* (5) She requires many Things as Conditions of Communion, which ſeem moſt plainly to be repugnant to the *Holy Scriptures*, *viz.* 'the 'offering Chriſt in the Maſs as a true pro-'pitiatory Sacrifice daily; Communion of 'the Laity in one Kind only; Prayer and 'Reading the Scriptures in an unknown 'Tongue; the Worſhip of the Croſs, and 'the Veneration of Images. And *laſtly*, She hath virtually undermin'd one Article of our Creed; and one Commandment, that *we ſhould have no other Gods but one*; by commanding us to worſhip that Bread we eat, with the Worſhip that is due to God alone, and by all theſe Things, She hath made it our neceſſary Duty, to ſeparate from her Communion. Now that which 'tis our Duty to do, can never be our Sin.

My laſt Propoſition is this, *That Faith conſider'd as eſſential to all the Members of Chriſt's Church, muſt be reſtrained to thoſe Articles which are abſolutely neceſſary to a Chriſtian Life, or to ſincere Obedience*; even to thoſe Articles, which whoſoever doth not believe, cannot believe what God in *Scripture* hath made neceſſary to be believ'd to Salvation, or cannot do thoſe *Chriſtian* Duties, which are requir'd of us in the Goſpel, as the Conditions of Salvation. The Reaſon is, becauſe Faith being only requiſite in order unto Holineſs of Life, that Faith which is ſufficient to produce in us Holineſs of Life, muſt alſo be ſufficient to unite us to the *Communion of Saints*. And on the other Side, that Error which deſtroys the Union of Faith, muſt by juſt Conſequence deſtroy a Life of Holineſs. For Inſtance, the Denial of the Reſurrection of the Body, is in the *Scripture* declar'd to be deſtructive of the Chriſtian Faith. For, they who ſaid *the Reſurrection is paſt already*, did *overthrow the Faith*, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, and *make it vain*. But then the ſame *Apoſtle* ſaith that Doctrine doth deſtroy that Hope which is the ſole Foundation of all *Chriſtian* Patience and Suffering for the Sake of Righteouſneſs, by making us to have *Hope only in this Life*; that it corrupts good Life,

2 Tim. 2. 18. 19. 1. Cor. 15.

Life, and makes it reaſonable for us to live as *Epicures*, and ſay, *let us eat and drink, for to Morrow we die.* This Doctrine, that only ſo much Faith is neceſſary to be believ'd, as is ſufficient to produce an holy Life, hath been ſo fully prov'd already, that I ſhall only add this one Conſideration; *viz.* that were not Holineſs of Life, and ſincere Obedience to the Commandments of God, ſufficient to ſecure our future Happineſs, vain and deluſory are all thoſe Promiſes, which do entail that Happineſs upon a Life of Holineſs, and promiſe it as the Reward of our Obedience, declaring *that Glory, Honour, and Peace ſhall be to ev'ry Soul that worketh Good*, and doth *by patient Continuance in well-doing ſeek for Immortality*; that *if we have our Fruit unto Holineſs*, the *End ſhall be eternal Life*; that *there is no Condemnation to them who walk not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit*; that *if we through the Spirit, do mortify the Deeds of the Fleſh, we ſhall live*; that if we *ſow to the Spirit, we ſhall of the Spirit reap Life everlaſting*; that *if we add to our Faith, Virtue, Knowledge, Godlineſs, Temperance, Brotherly-Kindneſs, Charity, We ſhall have an abundant Entrance into the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour*; that *if our Heart do not condemn us, then have we Confidence*

Rom. ii. 7. 10. vi. 22. viii. 1. 13. Gal. vi. 8. 2 Pet. i. 6, iii. 8. 1 Joh. iii. 21.

Matth. vi. 33. vii. 21. 24. 19. 17. Luke xi. 28 John ix. 31. 13. 17. xiv. 15, 21, 23. xv. 14. Acts x. 34, 35.

towards God; that *if we ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God and the Righteouſneſs thereof, all other Things ſhall be added to us*; that *He that doth the Will of his heavenly Father, ſhall enter into the Kingdom* of *God*; that *He that heareth Chriſt*'s *Sayings, and doth them, builds upon a Rock*; that *to love God with all our Hearts, and our Neighbour as our Selves*, is that which will procure for us *an Entrance into Life*; that *Bleſſed are they who hear the Word of God, and keep it*; that *if any Man be a Worſhipper of God, and doth his Will, Him he heareth*; that *He who hath his Commandments and keepeth them, He it is that loveth Him, and ſhall be loved of the Father*; and that both He and his Father will abide with them, that keep his Words; that *if we keep his Commandments, we ſhall abide in his Love*, and *be his Friends*; that *God is no Reſpecter of Perſons, but in ev'ry Nation, He that feareth Him, and worketh Righteouſneſs is accepted of Him*; I ſay theſe, and the like Encouragements and Promiſes recorded in the ſacred Writ, can miniſter but little Comfort to the Soul of any ſimple honeſt Heart, if his Aſſurance that He doth theſe Things, depends upon the *Orthodoxy* of his Faith, as ſome are pleas'd to aver, in all thoſe Points which are at preſent controverted and diſ-

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puted in the Church of God or made by others Conditions of Communion; for then He cannot poſſibly attain to any juſt Aſſurance, that He *worketh that which is good*, and continueth *in Well-doing*; that He *walketh in the Spirit*, and hath his *Fruit unto Holineſs*; that He doth the *Will of Chriſt*, and *keepeth his Commandments*; and the like; until he be aſſur'd, that He is of a right Belief in all thoſe Matters, which are at preſent ſtiffly controverted, or repreſented as neceſſary Parts of *Chriſtian* Communion. Whereas if you aſſure Him, that if He heartily believes the *Scriptures* and the *Apoſtles Creed*, He need not be concern'd about other Things, which relate purely to the Articles of *Chriſtian* Faith; but is ſecure, provided that to this Faith He adds an Obedience and Holy Life; He ſhall obtain the End of his Faith in the Salvation of his Soul, tho' He knows nothing of thoſe new Articles, which the contending Factions would impoſe upon Him, as the Conditions of Communion; you free Him from perplexing Doubts and Scruples, concerning this one Thing neceſſary.

Now for the due Improvement of this Propoſition; is Faith only neceſſary in Order unto Holineſs of Life? Is this the

chief End, for which it was revealed, to
Rom. xv. 18. xvi. 26. produce in us τὴν ὑπακοὴν τῆς πίστεως, that Obedience which is the Fruit of Faith? Let us all hearken to the good Advice of the *Apoſtle*, to give all Diligence to add unto our Faith, Virtue, Knowledge, Godlineſs, Patience, Temperance, Brotherly Kindneſs, Charity, without which, ſaith Saint *Peter*, we are blind, and ſo cannot diſcern the Way unto Life eternal. For ſeeing *without Holineſs, no Man ſhall ſee the Lord*, our Faith cannot avail to make us happy, till it hath firſt prevailed to make us Holy. Truſt not then to the *Orthodoxy* of your Opinions, but only to the Uprightneſs of your Converſation, as knowing that you are to be judged hereafter, according to your Works. Value not yourſelves on the Account of your Communion with any *Church by Law eſtabliſhed*, ſo much as on the Account of acting ſuitably to the Knowledge of your Duty, and walking worthy of that Vocation to which you are called, as well remembring that Saying of our Lord, *If you know theſe Things, happy are ye, if ye do them.* Do not give Heed to thoſe pernicious Doctrines, which teach Men to expect Salvation upon a naked Faith in *Chriſt*, without ſincere Obedience to his Will; and tell us, that *Chriſt* hath done all Things for us, and ſo obey'd in our Stead, as that we

we need do nothing, but apply his Merits, and that his Obedience will be accepted on our Behalf, as if we had done it. Be not deceived ſaith the *Apoſtle*, *He that doth Righteouſneſs is righteous. Faith without Works is dead*, ſaith *Saint James*, and therefore cannot give us Life; it cannot ſave, it cannot profit us, ſaith He, when it is ſeparated from good Works; it only ſerves to aggravate our Sin, and add unto our Condemnation. For *to know our Lord's Will*, and *not to do it*, will but encreaſe our Stripes. Hold then the Truth, but be ye ſure, that you do not hold it in unrighteouſneſs. Hold Faith, and a good Conſcience both, not ſeparating what God hath joined. For if you once let go the latter, you will ſoon make Shipwrack of the Former. Add to your Growth in Knowledge, Growth in Grace; to your pure Faith, Purity in Heart, and Life; to your ſincere Profeſſions, ſincere Obedience; as knowing that when you come to give up your Accounts, this will be the only Matter of your Joy and Comfort, that *in Simplicity and godly Sincerity you have had your Converſation here on Earth.*

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SERMON VIII.

ACTS. xxiv. 14.—

But this I confeſs unto thee, that after the Way which they call Hereſie, ſo worſhip I the God of my Fathers, believing all Things which are written in the Law and the Prophets.

FOUR Things ſeem worthy of our Conſideration from theſe Words.

Firſt, That Men of Zeal without Knowledge, may brand the beſt and moſt excellent Things, and the moſt *Chriſtian* Doctrines, with the moſt odious Names. For that very Doctrine which the blind *Jews* here call *Hereſie*, and which they repreſent, Chap xxviii. 22. as *an Hereſie every where ſpoken againſt*, is none other than that of our *bleſſed Lord* and *Saviour*, the *Chriſtian* Faith which He was ſent to preach unto the *Jews*, and which He com-

commanded his *Apoſtles* to preach to *all Nations*, and which was the moſt glorious and beneficial Revelation that ever was delivered to Mankind.

Secondly, That from the Inſtance of St. *Paul*, that *choſen Veſſel*, who received a Commiſſion immediately from the Mouth of *Chriſt*, to preach his glorious Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, we learn, that the beſt Men, doing the beſt Offices for the Promotion of the Salvation of others, and ſtedfaſtly believing all that God had taught Men in his Holy Word, may by *Jewiſh Zealots*, by paſſionate and ignorant Men and Women, be branded with the Name of *Hereticks*. For in the 5*th* Verſe of this very Chapter, St. *Paul* is repreſented as a *peſtilent Fellow*, *a Mover of Sedition*, and a *Ring-leader* τῆς τῶν Ναζωραίων Αἱρέσεως of *the Hereſie of the Nazarens*. Others therefore may be contented to be called *Hereticks* by Men and Women of the like *Jewiſh Zeal*, and unbridled Paſſions.

Thirdly, From theſe Words, *This I confeſs unto thee*, &c, I infer, that good and upright Men ought not to be aſhamed, to confeſs, profeſs, and practiſe that Way of worſhipping God, which after their beſt Inquiry, they judge moſt ſuitable to his good and holy Will, becauſe others diſprove of, and repreſent their Way of Wor-

Worſhip as the worſt of *Hereſies*. For *Hereſie*, ſaith the judicious Mr. *Hales*, is now ſet up as a *Theological Scare-Crow*, to frighten Men of Reaſon from enquiring into Truth, or from embracing and profeſſing what in their Hearts they believe ſo.

Fourthly, From the Apology of St. *Paul*, in anſwer to this Charge, *viz.* that He coud be no *Heretick*, becauſe He *believed all that was written in the Law, and the Prophets*, i. e. in the *Canonical Scriptures* of the *Jews*, I obſerve, that under the Goſpel Diſpenſation no Man can juſtly be cenſur'd and condemned as an *Heretick*, that believes all that is contained in the *Holy Scriptures*. Now from theſe Obſervations I have ſufficient Ground to diſcourſe on theſe two Heads.

1. That Men at preſent are, and formerly have been, too prone to paſs falſe Judgments upon Men and Doctrines, repreſenting thoſe Doctrines as *Heretical*, which either are moſt certain Truths, or innocent Miſtakes: And thoſe Men as *Hereticks*, who are Men of great Learning and Sincerity, and eminent for Piety and Virtue.

2. That no Man can be an *Heretick*, who believes all thoſe Doctrines, that after his beſt Inquiry, He conceives to be reveal'd in the Goſpel, or in the Words of *Chriſt*

Christ and his *Apostles* contained in the Gospel.

The Matter of Fact contained in the *1st.* Assertion, as to some Persons, and some Ages, will easily be own'd. No sooner did *Christianity* appear in the World, then it was by the *Jewish Zealots* stigmatis'd with this Name of *Odium.* The Teachers of it were represented as Ringleaders of *the Heresie of the Nazarenes*; and before the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, they added to their daily Prayers [*Beracoth Haminim*] *a Prayer against the Hereticks*, i. e. against the *Christians*, which they continue to this Day, imprecating upon them eternal Destruction, and desiring God to destroy the Kingdom of Impiety. From the 12*th* Century to this Day, the *Church* of *Rome* hath condemned, persecuted, tormented, murder'd and massacred many Myriads of the *Albigenses*, *Waldenses*, *Wicklifians*, *Protestants* under the Name of *Hereticks*; and yet I hope all *Protestants* believe that neither we, nor they deserve that Name of Infamy. But the prevailing Notion of an *Heretick*, is that which is defin'd in the *6th* Canon of the *1st General Council* of *Constantinople*; in these Words, Αιρέτικους λέγομεν, 'we call them 'Hereticks, which have been formerly con-'demned by the Church, or who hereafter,

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'ſhall be *anathematiz'd*. Whence it has commonly obtained even to our Days, that all are *Hereticks*, who have been condemned and anathematiz'd by a *General Council*. But that this is a very falſe Notion, and not to be admitted by any Member of the *Church of England*, is evident from her full Declaration, *Article* xxi, 'That Things ordained by General 'Councils as neceſſary to Salvation, have 'no force in them, unleſs they can be 'prov'd from the Holy Scriptures.' They are not therefore neceſſary, becauſe the *Council* doth ordain them, but becauſe the *Holy Scriptures* do atteſt them to be ſo. (2.) This appears from the Deſign of calling *Councils*, which is not to declare what ſhall be, but what is an Article of Faith; yea the very Word declaring ſuppoſeth the Thing to have been before, what they declare it to be; ſeeing no Declaration can make a Thing be what it is not. (3.) 'Tis certain that there can be no new Article of Faith neceſſary to be believed, after the Promulgation of the *Holy Scripture*. For divine Faith being an Aſſent unto God's Teſtimony, muſt be entirely contain'd in the Word of God. And all Obedience to his Holy Will, doth preſuppoſe the making his Will known unto us. Hence is Faith often ſtiled *the Will of God*, *the Command-*

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ment of God made known unto us, the Revelation of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Revelation of the Knowledge of God. Eph. i. 9. Rom. xvi. 25, 26. Eph. i. 17.

Now where can we expect to find the Will, the Commandment of God, but in the Word and the revealed Will of God? Hence it demonſtrably follows, that there can be no new *Hereſie*. For an *Hereſie* being in it's very Nature a Doctrine repugnant to ſome neceſſary Article of Faith; to ſay that a new *Hereſie* may ariſe, is to ſay, that a new Article of Faith may ariſe. Now we all know there neither was, nor could be any *General Council* 'till the Beginning of the fourth Century, and ſo their Decrees, and Declarations muſt come too late, either to make a new Article of neceſſary Faith, or a new *Hereſy* repugnant to it. In a Word, our Article declares that *General Councils have, and may err*, and conſequently are fallible in their Deciſions and Declarations of what is *Hereſie*. Now it is ſelf-evident, that a Deciſion liable to Falſe-hood in this very Thing, can yield no juſt Aſſurance of what is truly to be deem'd *Hereſie*. I cannot forbear one Inſtance very pertinent to this Subject, and ſufficient with wiſe Men to decide this Controverſy; to wit, the Decree of the very next *General Council* held at *Epheſus*, declaring them *Heretick*s, and ſubject to an *Anathema*, who own'd

own'd not the *Hypoſtatick Union*, a Term which common People cannot eaſily underſtand, ſince it depends only upon the Knowledge of the Metaphyſical Terms and Subtilties, of Perſonality and Exiſtence, of which they having no clear Ideas or Apprehenſions, cannot be enabled to Judge, whether the Union of the two Natures in Chriſt be Subſtantial or Accidental, Supernatural or Natural, whether it be ſufficient to declare, that the Divine and Human Nature are One by conſent, or by Inhabitation, or by Communion of Operations, or by Communion of Dignity and Honour, (all which the *Neſtorians*, acknowledg'd;) Or it be further neceſſary to Salvation to aſſert, that Chriſt's human Nature in this differs from all other human Natures, that it hath no Subſiſtence of it's own, but is by a *continual Miracle* ſuſtain'd in Being by the Divine. If this be not neceſſary to the Salvation of the common People, the Decree of this *General Council* muſt be falſe: If it be neceſſary, either to their, or our Salvation to believe it, the Lord have Mercy on us All. For, as I confeſs I do not, ſo I believe, the wiſeſt, and ſubtleſt of us all underſtand very little of this Matter, and much leſs of any clear Deciſion of it in the *Holy Scripture*, which is our Rule of Faith. I proceed to my next Aſſertion, *viz.* 2. That

2. That no Man can be an *Heretick*, who believes all thoſe Doctrines, which after his ſincere Indeavour to know the Will of God, He conceives to be revealed in *Holy Scriptures*, or in the Words of *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles* contained in the *Scriptures*. And this Aſſertion may be confirm'd, from the common Doctrine of all *Proteſtants*, prov'd fully by me, in a Diſcourſe on thoſe Words of the *Apoſtle*, *We uſe great Plainneſs of Speech*. For He that with Sincerity and honeſt Induſtry doth ſearch into that Rule, which plainly and with ſufficient Clearneſs delivers all Things neceſſary to be believ'd and done in order to Salvation, cannot fall into any Error, which is excluſive of Salvation. For where the Rule is plain and clear, what Man of Judgment, who is ſincere and honeſtly Induſtrious to know the Truth, can err ſo, as to forfeit his Salvation for not knowing what God hath plainly laid before his Eyes? Moreover, Is it not repugnant to the Deſign of God in giving us this Rule, and to the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God to give infallible Aſſiſtance to his *Apoſtles*, to write this Rule for the Benefit and Salvation of Mankind, if theſe Writings could not be underſtood by All, who ſincerely endeavour'd to know the Meaning of them, in all Things neceſſary to their Salvation?

Is not this in effect to ſay, that an All-wiſe God preſcribed Means inſufficient to obtain his End, the End of our Faith being, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, the Salvation of our Souls; and that a good and gracious God, who would have all Men to be ſaved, hath been deficient in preſcribing the Means neceſſary to come unto the Knowledge of his ſaving Truth, and that He truly wills the End, but is not willing to afford the Means, which He ſees neceſſary for the obtaining of that End?

3. The very Preface to the New-Teſtament is this, Τῆς Καινῆς Διαθήκης ἅπαντα, *the Whole of the new Covenant.* Now this Title prefixed to theſe Books doth plainly intimate, ſaith Dr. *Hammond*, the full and general Perſuaſion of the whole Church of God, that in thoſe Books was compriſed that whole new Covenant, of which the bleſſed *Jeſus* was the Mediator, and the *Apoſtles* were the Miniſters; and then ſurely they muſt contain all things requiſite for *Chriſtians* to believe or do in order to Salvation, or in order to their Performance of the Conditions, upon which Salvation in this new Covenant is tender'd; there being nothing which can be deem'd a more neceſſary and eſſential Part of the new Covenant, than the Conditions upon which Salvation is to be obtain'd by It. And if Men

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may perform the Conditions of the new Covenant; why ſhould they not expect God will perform his Promiſe of Salvation to them that do ſo? Nor can it be difficult to know the Conditions of this new Covenant, if we conſider, that one Part of it is this, that *God will put his Law into their Minds, and write* it in their Hearts ſo fully and ſo legibly, that *all ſhall know it, from the Greateſt to the Leaſt.* Heb. viii. 10.

4. The very Titles given to the Goſpel, and to thoſe Books in which it is contain'd ſtrongly confirm this Truth. For can it be truly ſtyled the *Goſpel of Salvation*, if it contain not fully all Things neceſſary to be believ'd or done in Order to Salvation? Can it be truly repreſented as the *common Salvation*, Jude 3; *Great Salvation*, Heb. ii. 3. *The Salvation of God*, Luk. iii. 6. *The Salvation of God* ſent unto the *Jews*, Acts xiii. 26. The *Salvation come unto the Gentiles*, Rom. xi. 11. *The Power of God thro' Faith unto Salvation*, Rom. i. 16. *The Word of Truth, the Goſpel of Salvation*, Eph. i. 13? Could, laſtly, Men be ſaid *to obtain Salvation thro' our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Theſſ. v. 8. and *believing in Him, to receive the End of their Faith, even the Salvation of their Souls*, if this Salvation were not to be obtain'd or receiv'd, by that Faith in *Chriſt*

ſo fully taught us in the *Scripture*? In fine, it is, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, ἡ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ, the ſaving Grace of God, which hath appeared to us to teach us, (Oh glorious *ſaving Grace*, which, ſaith the *Roman* Doctrine, can ſave no Man) which hath *appeared to us*, and yet *is hidden from us*, to teach us that which we can never learn.

Rom. xvi. 26. Again, the Goſpel is ſtyled the *Commandment of the everlaſting God, made known to all Chriſtians for the Obedience of Faith*; and is not Faith, and Obedience ſufficient for Salvation? And laſtly, it is, ſaith St *Paul*, *the Myſtery of Godlineſs, the Knowledge of that Truth which is after Godlineſs*, even that *Godlineſs which hath the Promiſe of this Life, and that which is to come*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. Tit. i. 1. 1 Tim. iv. 8.

(5) This further will appear, from the Commiſſion given to the *Apoſtles* to teach and to endite this Goſpel. Even the *Baptiſt* was ſent before *Chriſt*, *to give Knowledge of Salvation to his People*. And could then the Commiſſion given to *Chriſt's Apoſtles* be of leſs Importance? Our bleſſed Lord ſaid to his Diſciples, *As my Father*

Joh. xx. 21. *hath ſent me, ſo ſend I you*; and ſurely He was ſent to preach the *glad Tidings of Salvation*. *I am*, ſaith He, *the Light of the World, He that followeth me ſhall not walk in Darkneſs, but ſhall have the*

Light

Light of Life, John viii. 12. And to his *Apoſtles* he likewiſe ſaith, *Matth.* v. 14. *You are the Light of the World. I am*, ſaith He, *the Way, the Truth, and the Life.* And the *Apoſtles* were ſent to ſhew the Way of Salvation both to *Jew* and *Gentile*; for by them was *Salvation ſent* to both, *Acts* xiii. 26, 27, 28. They preached the Word of Truth, *the Goſpel of Salvation.* By them *the Savour of the Knowledge of Chriſt was made manifeſt in every Place*; ſo that to thoſe that were ſaved, they were *a Savour of Life unto Life*, 2 Cor. ii. 13, 14. Our *bleſſed Saviour brought Life and Immortality to Light by the Goſpel*, 2 Tim. i. 10. And St. *John* ſaith, in the Name of all the *Apoſtles*, *We ſhew unto you that eternal Life, which was with the Father, and was manifeſted to us. Chriſt* was anointed with the Spirit *to preach the Goſpel to the Poor*, Luke iv. 18. And he alſo, to enable them to perform their Office, or the Diſpenſation by him committed to them, πληρῶσαι τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ, *fully to preach the Word of God*, promiſed to them this Spirit to *lead* and guide *them into all Truth*; and therefore ſurely, into all Truths neceſſary to the Salvation of their Hearers; ſince otherwiſe, all that they taught could not be truly ſtyled the Goſpel of Salvation, or

be the *Power of God thro' Faith unto Salvation.* In fine, St *John* declares that the Things written in his, and in the other Gospels, were therefore written, *that we might believe that Jesus was the Christ the Son of God, and that believing we might have Life thro' his Name,* Joh. xx. 31.

(6) This will be exceeding evident, from a brief Reflection upon the gross Absurdities, or rather Blasphemies, which flow from the Denial of this Doctrine. For since the Scriptures of the new Testament, are the only Records left us, of all that *Christ*, and his *Apostles* did, and taught; if they contain not all that is necessary to be believ'd and done for our Salvation, hence it must follow, that all that *Christ* and his *Apostles* did for the Salvation of Mankind, is insufficient for the Salvation of one Person. For, if something which they have not declared in these Records, be necessary to the Salvation of a *Christian*, certain it is, that what they have declared is insufficient to that End: But of this having discours'd more largely on another Subject, I therefore shall conclude this Head with these Words of Bp. *Stillingfleet*; 'to say, that altho' the *Apostles* and '*Evangelists* did deliver the Mind of God 'to the World, in their Writings, in or-'der

Answer to several Tracts p. 101, 102.

'der to the Salvation of Mankind, and 'altho' they were inſpired with an infinite 'Wiſdom for this End, and that altho' a 'Perſon imploring the Divine Aſſiſtance, 'uſeth his ſincere Endeavour by all moral 'Helps, to find out in thoſe Writings the 'Things neceſſary to Salvation, yet after 'all, He cannot certainly underſtand the 'Meaning of them, appears to me to be a 'Doctrine ſo abſurd and monſtrous, ſo 'contrary to the Honour of the Scriptures, 'and the Deſign of Chriſtianity, that if 'I had a Mind to diſparage it, I would be-'gin with this, and end with Tranſub-'ſtantiation. For in earneſt, did not our 'Saviour ſpeak intelligibly, in Matters of 'ſo great Importance to the Salvation of 'Mankind? Did he not declare all that 'was neceſſary to that End, in his many 'admirable Diſcourſes? Did not the Evan-'geliſts record his Words and Actions in 'writing, and that, as one of them ſaith 'expreſsly, that *we might believe, that Je-'ſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God, and be-'lieving we might have Life thro' his Name?* 'And after all this, cannot we underſtand 'ſo much as the common Neceſſaries to 'Salvation, by our greateſt and moſt ſin-'cere Endeavours for that End: And why then doth He cloſe thus, his admirable Diſcourſe upon the Mount, *Whoſoever*

heareth theſe Sayings and doth them, I will liken Him to a wiſe Man, who built his Houſe upon a Rock? and in another ſay, *Labour for the Meat which endureth to eternal Life, which the Son of Man will give unto you?* Joh. vi. 27 and 40. *This is the Will of Him that ſent Me, that every one that ſeeth the Son, and believeth in Him, ſhould have eternal Life, and I will raiſe Him up at the laſt Day.* Now to improve this Doctrine.

(1) Hence it is certain that no good Man can be a Heretick, that He who ſeeketh the Truth, in the Love of it, and is truly induſtrious to know the Will of God that He may do it, can never be condemned by a gracious God, for his unſeen and his unwilling Errors, there being no *Hereſy* which is not repugnant to ſome Article of Holy Scripture, which all who truly are deſirous to know the Truth, may underſtand in all Things neceſſary to Salvation. This will be evident to a Demonſtration, from the Deſcription which the *Holy Scriptures*, our only Rule of Faith, have given both of *Hereſy*, and *Hereticks*.

Gal. v. 19, 20, 21. For (1) Hereſy is by the *Apoſtle* ſtyled, one of thoſe *Works of the Fleſh*, which *they that do ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God*, and which they that are Chriſt's *have crucify'd*. It muſt be then a Work, proceeding from ſome carnal Principle, prevailing

vailing over us; from Pride, and Vain-glory, as in thoſe Men who *ſpake perverſe Things, to draw away Diſciples after them*; or from Covetouſneſs, or ſome other carnal Luſt. And hence are ſuch Men ſaid, *not to ſerve God, but their own Bellies*, Rom. xvi. 18. *To teach what they ought not, for filthy Lucres Sake*, Tit. i. 11. *To account Gain Godlineſs, and thro' Covetouſneſs with feigned Words, to make Merchandize of others*, 2 Pet. ii. 3. (2) By ranking *Hereſy* among thoſe Luſts of the Fleſh, which are *manifeſt*, eſpecially to thoſe who are guilty of them. Now cannot any honeſt Man be inwardly aſſur'd, that in his Search after the Will of God contained in Scripture, He hath not been acted by any carnal Motives, or any ſiniſter Deſigns, but purely from a ſincere Deſire to find out the Truth; and may He not be hence aſſur'd, that, in the *Scripture* Senſe, He neither is, nor can be guilty of an *Hereſy?* Seeing then *Hereſy* is put here among the Works of the Fleſh, and rank'd with all Manner of practical Impieties; Hence we may learn, that if a Man mingles not a fleſhly Luſt with his Opinion, if his Heart be upright towards God, tho' his Head be deceived, his Error may be his Misfortune, but cannot be his Condemnation: And that to ſay otherwiſe, is in Effect to ſay, that

that ſome Men may be damned for what they cannot help, and be for ever miſerable, for an unknown and unwilling Error, and an unavoidable Infirmity. (2) Paſs we on now, to the Deſcription the ſame Apoſtle gives us of an *Heretick*, in
Tit. iii. 10. theſe Words, *A Man that is an Heretick, after the firſt and ſecond Admonition, reject,* Εἰδὼς *Knowing that He*, who is ſuch a one, Ἐξεστρέπται is *ſubverted* from *the Faith*, and *ſins*, ὢν Αὐτοκατάκριτος *being condemned by Himſelf*, or his own *Conſcience*. Whence we learn, (1) That an *Heretick* is one who is *perverted from the Faith*, holding ſome Doctrine, or Opinion which ſubverteth the Foundation of it. (2) That He is a Man, who in doing this, is *condemned by his own Conſcience*, and who in what He doth maintain, or practiſe, ſins againſt his own Convictions. Hence the *Apoſtle* doth not ſay to *Titus*, Do thou convince Him of his Error, but do thou admoniſh Him of his Fault, which ſhews the Crime lay not in his Head, or his miſtaken Judgment; ſince that can never be corrected by Admonitions, but only by Inſtructions. It therefore muſt lye in the Irregularity of his Affections, and the Perverſeneſs of his Will; becauſe otherwiſe, He could not condemn himſelf by maintaining his *Hereſy*; for no Man who acts according to his beſt

beſt Judgment, even tho' it be erroneous, is ſelf-condemn'd in that Action: but rather would be ſo, if He ſhould act againſt it. Hence, ſaith St *Auſtin*, *Errare poſſum, Hereticus eſſe nolo*; placing *Hereſy* not in the Judgment, but in the Will. And ſure it is, that Men of ill Deſigns and corrupt Affections, may *utter perverſe Things*, ſpeak *Lies in Hypocriſy*, and *bring in damnable Doctrines*, out of Diſguſt and Envy, Pride and Vain-glory, or out of Covetouſneſs; whereas the Man of an upright Heart, who after a ſincere Enquiry and honeſt Induſtry to know the Will of God, miſtakes in judging of it, is only ſubject to an Error, that was to Him unavoidable, and therefore not condemning, it being not in his Power to believe otherwiſe than his beſt Judgment doth inform Him. But here it is objected, that ſuch *Hereticks* are very few, there being few that oppoſe the Truth wittingly, and they are only known to God, and therefore cannot be admoniſhed, and avoided. *Obj.*

Now, with the firſt Part of this Objection, I very heartily accord, believing that a good and gracious God will damn very few, if any, purely for the Weakneſs of their Heads, but many for the Badneſs of their Hearts; few for their unknown and unwilling Errors, but many for their wilful

ful Sins; few *Chriſtians* for the Want of Faith, but many for the Want of that Obedience, which is the genuine Fruit of Faith. But then the ſecond Part of this Objection, which ſaith, ſuch Men are only known to God, and therefore could not be admoniſhed, or avoided, is a plain Contradiction to the Words of the *Apoſtle*, requiring to admoniſh and reject the *Heretick*, as *knowing* that He is perverted, and ſinneth againſt his own Conſcience, laying this Knowledge as the Ground both of his Admonition and Rejection of Him. And ſure it is, that whilſt the Doctrine taught by *Chriſt*'s *Apoſtles*, was continually ſounding in Men's Ears, and freſh in their Minds and Memories, it muſt be eaſy to diſcern, what Doctrines were repugnant to, and ſubverſive of the Faith they taught, and therefore to reject them as *falſe Apoſtles*, and *deceitful Workers* who maintained them.

Doctor dubitant. I conclude all with the Words of Bp. *Taylor*; 'The Conſequence of this Diſ-'courſe, in Order to Conſcience, is, that 'no Man loſe his Peace, concerning the 'controverted Articles and Diſputes of 'Chriſtendom. If He enquires after 'Truth ſincerely, as after Things of great 'Concernment; if He prays to God to 'aſſiſt Him, and uſes theſe Means which

'are

'are in his Hands, and do his beſt for 'the finding it; if He be indifferent to, 'and loves it only, becauſe He thinks it 'true; if He will quit any Intereſt, ra-'ther then loſe a Truth; if he dares to own 'what he hath found and believ'd, and loves 'it ſo much the more, by how much he 'believes it more conducing to Piety, and 'to the Honour of God; he hath done 'what a wiſe and good Man ſhould do; 'he needs not regard, tho' any Man 'threatens him with Damnation; for he 'that heartily endeavours to pleaſe God, 'and ſearcheth what his Will is that he 'may obey it, he certainly loves God, 'and nothing that loves God can periſh.

SER-

SERMON IX.

GAL. I. 8.—

Tho' we, or an Angel from Heaven, preach any other Goſpel unto you, than that which we have preach'd unto you, let him be accurs'd.

WHEN the *Jewiſh Zealots* diſturbed the Gentiles of the Church of *Antioch* by declaring, *Acts* xv. 1. That *unleſs they were circumciſed, according to the Law of Moſes, they could not be ſaved.* The *Synod* held at *Jeruſalem* determined that by that Doctrine they *ſubverted* their *Souls*, ver. 24. And when the ſame

ſame *Zealots* had ſo far impos'd on the Credulity of the *Galatians*, as to perſuade them that, *without Circumciſion* and Obedience to the Law of *Moſes*, they could not be *juſtify'd* by Faith in *Chriſt*; the *Apoſtle* in this *Epiſtle*, declares to them, that by this Perſwaſion they were *brought into Bondage*, ch. ii. 4, and ſo *bewitched* that they *did not obey the Goſpel of God*, ch. iii. 1. nor *Stand faſt in the Liberty which Chriſt had purchaſed for them* with his precious Blood, and that, by embracing this Doctrine, they were *turned from Him that called them to Grace by Chriſt*, ch. i. 6. *they fruſtrated the Grace of God and made Chriſt die in vain*, ch. ii. 21. that *Chriſt would profit them nothing*, *they being fallen from Grace*, ch. v. 2, 4. And laſtly, He affirms that this Doctrine did *pervert the Goſpel of Chriſt*, and that they who taught it *did preach another Goſpel* from that which the *Apoſtles* preached, and therefore upon this Account he pronounceth them ſubject to an *Anathema*, and ſo ſeparated from the Body of *Chriſt*, and incapable of any Bleſſing from his ſalutary Death and Paſſion, and to aſſure them of the Importance of this Subject, and how much it concern'd them to attend to it, He repeats it thus, *as I ſaid before, ſo ſay* I now *again, If any Man——Anathema*

Hence

Hence I obſerve, *that they who pretend to an Authority from God, or our Lord Chriſt to teach any Thing as neceſſary to the Juſtification, or Salvation of a Chriſtian, which is not by the Goſpel of Chriſt made, or declar'd to be neceſſary to thoſe Ends, do preach another Goſpel, and ſo fall under the Anathema pronounc'd by St.* Paul *againſt them that do ſo.* This will be evident

1. From the great Principle of the whole *Proteſtant Religion*, fully taught, and frequently aſſerted by *the Church of England*, viz. *that the Goſpel of Chriſt doth with ſufficient Evidence contain all Things neceſſary to be believ'd* or *done in order to the Salvation of a Chriſtian.* For if this Doctrine be true, whoſoever doth preſume, under Pretence of an Authority from God or Chriſt, to add any Laws to thoſe of the Goſpel, as truly neceſſary to be obey'd in order to Salvation, as it is neceſſary to yield Obedience to the Laws of *Chriſt* contain'd in the Goſpel, muſt therefore fall under the *Anathema* denounc'd by St. *Paul* againſt thoſe who preach another Goſpel, for by adding thoſe Laws as neceſſary to Salvation, which the *Goſpel of Chriſt* hath not made neceſſary, they muſt be ſuppoſed, according to St. *Paul*'s Doctrine to preach another Goſpel, becauſe they do the very

ſame

ſame Thing which St. *Paul* condemns as ſuch.

For therefore doth He declare, that the *Galatians* were *turned away, from Him that called them to the Grace of Chriſt, unto another Goſpel,* becauſe they had embraced the Doctrine of Circumciſion as neceſſary to their Juſtification, and Salvation, which the Goſpel had not made neceſſary to that End. And therefore doth He charge the Preachers of this Doctrine as μεταστρέφοντες, *Men who perverted, and overturn'd the Goſpel of Chriſt*; and upon this Account denounced this *Anathema* againſt them, becauſe they taught ſomething to be neceſſary to the Juſtification and Salvation of a *Chriſtian,* beſides what they had delivered as ſuch who preached the *Goſpel of Chriſt.*

And ſurely if the Goſpel be *the Goſpel of Chriſt,* and be deſervedly ſtyled *the Goſpel of Salvation,* to preach that ſome other Terms, not contained in the Goſpel of Chriſt, are neceſſary to Salvation, muſt be to preach another Goſpel; if it be truly ſtyled ἡ χάρις ἡ σωτήριος *the ſaving Grace of God,* and St. *Paul* truly hath declared it to be *the Power of God through Faith unto Salvation,* to aſſert any Thing as neceſſary to be believ'd or done, in order to Salvation, which is not made ſo by the Goſpel, is plainly to defeat the whole De-

Epheſ. i. 13.

Tit. ii. 11.

Rom. i. 16.

ſign, and, even the Title of the Goſpel; it alſo in Effect pronounceth *Chriſt* a *Falſe Prophet*, becauſe He hath ſo often promiſed that *He that believeth, and is baptized in his Name*, and that *He that believeth in Him ſhould never periſh but have everlaſting Life*; it is really to deny that ever *Chriſt* was ſent into the World to be our *Saviour*, or that He was exalted by his Father *to be a Prince and a Saviour*, or that He did fully perform the Work for which his *Father* ſent him: 'tis alſo, to affirm that the *Apoſtles* were *falſe Witneſſes*, in ſaying that *theſe Things were written that you might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, and that believing ye might have Life through his Name*, and teſtifying that the *Goſpel of Chriſt was the Power of God thro' Faith unto Salvation*. Moreover, He that pretendeth a divine Authority to teach any other Doctrine as neceſſary to Salvation than *Chriſt* did, or to propound any other Terms of Salvation or Damnation than thoſe which are contained in his Goſpel, he muſt either have the ſame Commiſſion which *Chriſt* had to do ſo, and muſt be able to prove his Commiſſion as *Chriſt* did, by the like powerful Miracles, or elſe muſt be eſteemed the Preacher of another Goſpel upon the ſame Account as were the *Jewiſh Doctors* for preaching up the Neceſſity

Mark xvi. 16.
John x. 28.
Acts v. 31.
John xx. 31.

ſity of Circumciſion to the Salvation of the *Gentiles*, and ſo muſt equally fall under St. *Paul*'s *Anathema*. In fine, ſeeing St. *James* hath taught us *that there is but one Lawgiver who is able to ſave, and to deſtroy*, and upon that Account hath forbid all *Chriſtians* to paſs this Decretory Sentence upon one another; ſeeing the making of ſuch Laws upon which the State of Chriſt's Subjects abſolutely depends, is evidently a Right inſeparable from *Royal Authority*, and the peculiar Priviledge of a Lawgiver, he that pretendeth to a Power of making ſuch Laws upon the Obſervation or Neglect of which the Salvation, or Damnation of Chriſt's Subjects ſhall depend, muſt have a *Regal Authority*, different from that of *Chriſt*; and if Chriſt's Subjects lye under a Neceſſity of obeying his Laws in Order to their Salvation, as they muſt do if he have any juſt Authority to impoſe upon them any ſuch Terms of Salvation, they muſt be as much his Subjects, as the Subjects of *Chriſt*; ſince all Men muſt be equally Subjects to them whoſe Laws they are equally oblig'd to obey, and muſt have the Sentence of Abſolution or Damnation paſs'd upon them, not only by the *Goſpel of Chriſt* as St *Paul* plainly teacheth, but by their Obedience or Diſobedience to the

Things taught as neceſſary to Salvation by theſe *Lawgivers*.

2. Hence it appears that Men may err fundamentally, not only by rejecting a *fundamental Article* of Faith, *i. e.* an Article neceſſary to be believed as the Foundation of true Piety towards God, and of ſincere Obedience to his Laws; but alſo by maintaining, and teaching in the Name of Chriſt, or by Authority from God, Things unneceſſary to be neceſſary, ſo as to ſay Salvation cannot be obtained without Obſervance of them; and herein conſiſts the great Guilt of the *Church of Rome*, and particularly of the *Trent Council*, that they have added twelve *unneceſſary Articles* to the old *Chriſtian Creed*, into the Faith of which alone all *Chriſtians* were baptized for above 300 Years, and have defined them ſo neceſſary to be believed by all *Chriſtians* that no Salvation can be obtained without the Belief of them; and ſo they ſeem plainly to have fallen under the *Anathema of St. Paul* more dreadful than all the *Anathema's* which they have thundred out againſt *Proteſtants*. And whereas Mr. *Walker* and other *Papiſts* ſay that the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks here only of *Doctrines contrary to the Goſpel*, and not of preaching Doctrines not contained in the Goſpel, this Subterfuge is confuted by the expreſs

expreſs Words of the *Apoſtle*. For, as all the *Greek Commentators* upon the Text obſerve, the *Apoſtle* ſaith not ἐὰν ἑτερο͂, *if they ſpeak Things* contrary, but κἂν μικρὸν τι εὐαγγελίζονται παρ' ὃ, *but if* they preach as Goſpel the *leaſt Thing beſides what the Apoſtle* preached; and that this was the Senſe of the whole *Church of God*, St. *Auguſtin* informs us by ſaying to the *Donatiſts*, if you ſay theſe Things *non ex divinis, ſed ex vobis*, we anſwer duly, Anathema ſit, *tenent enim Eccleſiæ* Apoſtolico *labore fundatæ, cum quantâ curâ ſibi prædictum ſit*, if any Man preach any thing *præterquam quod accepiſtis, Anathema ſit*; and again, if any one from Heaven preach to you any thing concerning *Chriſt*, or his *Church*, or of any other Thing pertaining to Faith or Manners, beſides what is contained in the legal, or evangelical Scripture, let Him be Anathema. (2*dly*.) This Expoſition will not free the *Papiſts* from the *Anathema* of the *Apoſtle*, for by this very Thing, that under Pretence of preaching the Goſpel of *Chriſt* or what He hath commiſſioned them to preach, they add any Thing, as neceſſary to be believ'd, or done in Order to Salvation, which the *Apoſtles* did not declare to be ſo, they do no leſs oppoſe the Doctrine of the *Apoſtles*, than they did who enjoin'd Circumciſion, and the Obſervation of the

Contra Epiſt. Petil. To. 7. p. 542. Contra lib. Petil. l. 3. c. 6. p. 167.

Law of Moſes as neceſſary to the Salvation of the *believing Gentiles*; for therefore did theſe Men oppoſe the Doctrine of the *Apoſtles*, and preach another Goſpel, becauſe they taught theſe Things were neceſſary to the Salvation of the *Gentiles*, and conſequently declared that what the *Apoſtles* taught as ſufficient to their Salvation was not ſo, without their Additions, which is the very Thing which the *Papiſts* do by their new Articles, and their traditionary Doctrines; for if they be indeed neceſſary to Salvation, what is delivered in the Goſpel, in which they themſelves confeſs ſome of their Doctrines are not contained, cannot be ſufficient to Salvation. Laſtly, it is extremely evident that ſome of their new Doctrines are plainly repugnant to the Deciſions of the *Holy Scriptures*. Thus by bowing down to the *Image of the Croſs*, of the *Bleſſed Virgin*, of the *Apoſtles*, of *Saints* and *Martyrs*, they in flat Oppoſition to the *ſecond Commandment bow down to the Similitude of Something in Heaven or Earth or under the Earth*; that by Denyal of the *Cup of Bleſſing* to the *Laity*, they tranſgreſs the expreſs Words of our *Saviour* ſaying at the Inſtitution of that Sacrament, *Drink ye all of this*, and that for a Reaſon common to all *Chriſtians*, *for this is my Blood ſhed for the Remiſſion of your Sins*;

Sins; and that by requiring their *publick Prayers and Praiſes* to be made in an *unknown Tongue*, they tranſgreſs the Precept of the *Pſalmiſt*, *ſing ye Praiſes with underſtanding*, and of the *Apoſtle*, *to pray with underſtanding*; *becauſe otherwiſe the unlearned cannot join in thoſe Prayers and praiſes, becauſe He underſtands not what is ſaid.*

I heartily wiſh the *Church of Rome* alone could juſtly be charg'd with this Crime; but if what was true when the *Apoſtle* ſpake it, is true ſtill, then this *Anathema* muſt fall upon all *Churches*, Synods, and Perſons, who do the ſame Thing which thoſe *Jewiſh Zealots* did, againſt whom this *Anathema* is pronounc'd; for the ſame Reaſon holds as ſtrongly againſt any other Perſons, *Churches*, and *Synods*, who upon Pretence of a divine Warrant do aſſert any other Doctrines or Practices to be neceſſary to Salvation which the Goſpel of *Chriſt* hath not made neceſſary to that End, ſince they as truly and fully do declare that what the Goſpel hath taught us is not ſufficient for Salvation without their Additions. And therefore,

(1.) They who aſſert that an *uninterrupted regular Succeſſion* of *Biſhops* and *Prieſts* is abſolutely neceſſary to the Being of a *Chriſtian Church*, and to the Benefit which People may receive from any of

Chriſt's Ordinances, muſt either prove this to be deliver'd with ſufficient Evidence and Clearneſs in Chriſt's Goſpel, or muſt fall under St. *Paul's Anathema*; ſince if this be not ſo, they declare that to be neceſſary to the Salvation of *Chriſtians*, which neither the Goſpel of *Chriſt*, nor his *Apoſtles* commiſſionated to preach that Goſpel, have made neceſſary. A regular Succeſſion of *Biſhops*, *Prieſts*, and *Deacons*, according to the true Import of that Phraſe, that is, a Succeſſion of perſons qualifi'd as the *Scripture* doth require, and ordained, according to the *Primitive Inſtitution*, by *Prayer and Impoſition of Hands*, is highly requiſite where it can be had to the well being of the *Church*; but to aſſert *a regular uninterrupted Succeſſion* of ſuch Perſons to be ſo neceſſary to the Favour of God, that without it the ſincereſt *Chriſtian* ſhall not arrive at Happineſs, is not only to aſſert that to be neceſſary to Salvation which neither *Chriſt*, nor his *Apoſtles*, ever mention'd as neceſſary to that End, and of which no *Chriſtian* can be certain, ſeems both repugnant to divine Goodneſs, and deſtructive of true Chriſtian Comfort: For certainly 'a juſt and a good God, 'cannot put the eternal Salvation of his 'Creatures upon any Thing but what 'He hath put in their Power to do, or to 'be

'be ſatisfy'd about, ſince the Uncertainty 'of theſe Things thus own'd to be ne-'ceſſary to Salvation, would rob Men of 'all comfortable Aſſurance of their fu-'ture Happineſs.' They alſo muſt be concern'd in St. *Paul's Anathema*, who pronounce all Schiſm damnable, or that it is neceſſary to Salvation to hold external Communion with ſome particular Church. The firſt Aſſertion, as it has not one Word in *Scripture* to ſupport it, ſo is it liable to this Abſurdity, to aſſert either that no Man can be guilty of Separation from the external Communion of a particular Church out of unwilling Ignorance, or thro' Weakneſs and Infirmity of Judgment; or that Sins of Weakneſs, Infirmity and unwilling Ignorance are damnable, and then God have Mercy on us all; for who can ſay He is entirely free from all Sins of Ignorance, and Infirmity, and hath not rather cauſe to ſay with the *Royal Pſalmiſt*, *If thou, Lord, ſhouldeſt mark what is done amiſs*, in this kind, *who could ſtand?* Nor (2) is there any Thing in *Scripture* that tends to ſhew that they who, thro' the like Miſtakes, think themſelves bound to ſeparate from the external Communion of our *Church*, are incapable of Salvation. That ſuch external Communion cannot be abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation, Mr. *Chillingworth* proves; (1) Becauſe a Man un-

unjuſtly excommunicated is thereby ſeparated from the external Communion of the Church, and yet 'tis certain that an unjuſt Sentence paſſed upon him will not be executed by a juſt God; and therefore cannot obſtruct God's Favour to him. (2) Both He and Dr. *Stillingfleet* declare, that as one *Particular Church* may require ſome unlawfull Condition of Communion, and yet continue a true Church, ſo may all particular Churches do; and in this caſe it may be a Man's Duty to abſtain from the *external Communion* of all, and yet it's ſelf-evident that it cannot be neceſſary for any Man's Salvation to do what is unlawful to be done. And the Caſe ſeems actually to have happen'd in all particular Churches of the *Roman Communion* before the Beginning of the Reformation, it being ſelf-evident that till ſome of the *Weſtern Churches* had reform'd their *Liturgies*, and *Superſtitions*, no Man convinced of the groſs Corruptions which obtained in all thoſe Churches, could join in *external Communion* with any of them. Laſtly this Doctrine lays a Neceſſity of being damn'd upon all who thro' an unwilling Error judge it unlawfull to join thus in Communion with the *Church of England*, whether they do it, or they do it not; for all Men own that He who joins in external Communion with

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the Church of England, whilſt his Conſcience tells Him it is a Sin ſo to do, is *ſelf-condemned*, and Guilty of a willfull Sin, and ſo is out of God's Favour, and is liable to his Wrath: If then external Communion with the *Church of England* be neceſſary to entitle this Man, ſo perſuaded, to the Favour of God, He muſt lie under a neceſſity of being out of Favour with God, and under his Wrath, whether He doth thus communicate with it, or doth not.

This alſo, I much fear, will be as true of all thoſe *Councils*, whether of the old, or new Stile, who have pronounced *Anathema's* againſt, that is, have ſentenced to Damnation, all that held contrary to their *Doctrines*, provided that the Goſpel of *Chriſt* hath paſſed no ſuch decretory Sentence on them; for be their Doctrines never ſo true, yet if the Goſpel hath not declared them neceſſary to Salvation, they by theſe Declarations muſt *preach another Goſpel*, and uſurp the Authority of that *Lawgiver* who alone *is able to ſave and to Deſtroy*. This will be evident from theſe two Conſiderations, (1.) That there can be no *new Hereſie*; for a *Hereſie* being nothing elſe but a Doctrine repugnant to, and deſtructive of ſome neceſſary Article of *Chriſtian Faith*, to ſay that *new Hereſies* may ariſe, is to ſay that new

new Articles of Faith may ariſe after the Promulgation of the Goſpel by Chriſt and his Apoſtles. 2*dly*, That no Definition or Deciſion of a *Council* can make that neceſſary to be believed or practiſed in order to Salvation which was not ſo before their Declaration. For, (1) a Declaration that a Thing is ſo, is either falſe, or elſe it is a Declaration of what it was before; either then the thing declared was neceſſary before, and then the *Council's* Declaration adds nothing to the Neceſſity of it; or it was not revealed to be ſo before, and then the *Council* muſt have a new Revelation that it is what it was not before, and ſo muſt be obliged to prove that Revelation by ſuch Miracles as *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles* did, to confirm and eſtabliſh their Revelations. In fine, this Aſſertion, that either *Church* or *Council* have Power to make, or to declare new Articles of Faith neceſſary to be believed by all *Coriſtians*, caſts a moſt vile Reproach on *Coriſt*, and his *Apoſtles*, becauſe it plainly doth ſuppoſe that they have not revealed, or declar'd to *Coriſtians* all Things to be believed, or done in order to Salvation. Now either *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles* knew this Doctrine to be a neceſſary Article of Faith, or they did not; if they did not know it ſo to be, either they taught they knew not what, which

which it is Blaſphemy to aver; or elſe they taught it not, and whence then could the *Church* or *Council* learn it? If they knew it, either they conceal'd it, or declar'd it. To ſay they conceal'd any Part of the Goſpel neceſſary to Salvation, is to charge them with the higheſt Sacriledge, it is to charge theſe *Stewards of the Myſteries of Chriſt* with the want of that Fidelity which they themſelves have declared to be neceſſary in all Stewards, and with Preſumption in denouncing *Anathema's*, even to *Angels* in caſe they preach'd any other Doctrine than what they taught; it is in plain Terms to give them the Lie, ſeeing they frequently profeſs that they taught *Chriſtians the whole Doctrine of Chriſt*, and that they declared to them *that Goſpel which if they did believe they ſhould be ſaved*; if they did know and declare it, then it was a full and formal Article of neceſſary Faith, and the contrary Doctrine was *Hereſie*, without any further Declaration.

Now the Improvement of this Doctrine, or the Conſequences which flow from it, are both of high Importance in themſelves, and very neceſſary for this preſent Age. For hence it follows, that the *Holy Scriptures* are a full and ſufficient Rule of all Things neceſſary to be believ'd or done in order to the Salvation of

of all *Chriſtians*; ſo that nothing can be a neceſſary Article of Faith which the *Scripture* hath not declared neceſſary to be believ'd by them. For (1) if this be not own'd, *Chriſt* cannot have fully declar'd to us the *new Covenant of Grace* of which He is the *Mediator*; nor could the *Apoſtles* be *able Miniſters of the New Teſtament*, ſeeing that Covenant muſt contain the Terms on which the Bleſſings promiſed in that Covenant might be obtained. *2dly*, The contrary Propoſition (as hath been proved) caſts theſe vile Reproaches upon *Chriſt*, and his *Apoſtles*, that all that He, and they have done in order to our Salvation, is not ſufficient to procure the Salvation of one *Chriſtian*. For if ſomething which they have not declared be neceſſary to the Salvation of a *Chriſtian*, 'tis evident that all they have declar'd is not ſufficient to that End. And why then did our Saviour ſay theſe Things, I ſpeak unto you that ye might be ſaved? Why is He ſtiled that *Saviour who gives Salvation to his People*, and who is *able to ſave to the uttermoſt*? Why doth St. *John* ſay, *Theſe Things were written that ye might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, and that believing ye might have Life thro' his Name*? Why doth St. *Paul* ſay to the *Corinthians*, *I have made known to you the Goſpel of Chriſt which*

you

you have received, and in which you ſtand, and by which alſo you are ſaved? Why doth He call it ἡ χάρις ἡ σωτήριος, the *ſaving Grace of God?* Why doth St. *Peter* teach that *believing in Him whom we have not ſeen, we receive the End of our Faith, the Salvation of our Souls?* Why doth St. *John* ſay, *we teſtify and declare to you that eternal Life which was with the Father and hath been manifeſted to us?*

1 Cor. xv. 1, 2. Tit. ii. 11. 1 Pet i. 9. 1 John i. 2.

Again, if any *Church*, or *Council* can in after-Ages declare that to be a neceſſary Article of *Chriſtian* Faith which they have not declared to be ſo, then muſt they be as truly *Lawgivers*, as *Chriſt* himſelf; He being only ſo, as having a Commiſſion to preſcribe Laws for the Salvation of his People. If therefore others can do this, they alſo muſt be ſuch *Lawgivers* as are *able to ſave and to deſtroy*; and that more properly than *Chriſt the Finiſher of our Faith* (if indeed it be yet finiſhed,) who it ſeems left it unfiniſhed. In a Word, can it be reaſonable to think it can be neceſſary for any *Chriſtian* to have more in his Creed than the *Apoſtles*, and the *Chriſtians* of the three firſt Ages? Can after Ages make the narrow Way to Life more narrow than *Chriſt*, and his *Apoſtles* left it? Can any Reaſon be aſſign'd why Men may not be ſaved now by the ſame Faith which was ſufficient

ficient for Salvation in the Days of the Apoſtles, and in the three firſt Centuries? And yet if this be not ſo, 'tis certain that nothing can be now a neceſſary Article of *Chriſtian* Faith which was not by the *Apoſtles* declar'd to be ſo, and that there can be no *new Hereſie*, and then no Definition of a *Council* can make that to be *Hereſie* which was not ſo before.

2*dly*, Hence let all thoſe who are ſo forward to condemn their *Chriſtian* Brethren as *Hereticks*, or wanting in ſome neceſſary Point of *Chriſtian* Faith, be ſure the *Holy Scriptures* hath firſt paſt this Sentence on them, leſt they fall under St. *Paul*'s *Anathema*, and uſurp the Prerogative of that one *Lawgiver who alone is able to ſave and to deſtroy*, by this raſh Judgment. Excellent to this Purpoſe are the Words of pious *Salvian* touching the *Arians*; 'We judge them injurious to the 'divine Generation in ſaying the Son is 'inferior to the *Father*, but they judge us 'injurious to the Father by making the Son 'equal to Him.' They err therefore; but it is with a good Mind, not from Hatred, but Affection to God, believing that they know and love God; tho' therefore they have not a true Faith, they think they have a perfect Love to God, how for this Error they ſhall be dealt with at the Day of Judgment, *Nullus poteſt ſcire niſi judex*

Judex, none but the Judge can know; *De Gubern. Dei* l. 5. p. 153.

This Doctrine highly tends to the Improvement of true Charity towards our *Christian* Brethren, and to abate those evil and even *damnatory Censures*, we are too apt to pass upon them. In order to this End, I lay down this as a most certain Truth, that *Christian Charity* is represented in the *Scripture* as a Duty absolutely necessary to Salvation; for, saith St. *Paul*, tho' we could advance to the highest Degree of *Faith* and Prophecy, tho' we should suffer Martyrdom for the Faith, or spend all our Substance in Alms-deeds to relieve the Poor, *and have not Charity*, *we can have nothing* acceptable in the Sight of God. By Faith we are saved, saith this *Apostle*, and *we are saved thro' Hope*; great therefore saith He are these three, *Faith*, *Hope*, and *Charity*, *but the greatest of these is Charity*. He further saith, that τὸ τέλος τῆς παραγγελίας *the Scope of the evangelical Dispensation is Charity out of a pure Heart, and Faith unfeigned.* St. *Peter* declares, that in order to our Entrance into *Christ's heavenly Kingdom*, *we must add unto our Faith brotherly Kindness*, *Charity*; and St. *John*, that *He that loveth not* (that is,) hath not Charity towards *his Brother*, *hath not known God*; and *that He who loveth not his Brother*

1 Cor. xiii. 1, 3, 13.

1 Tim. i. 5.

2 Pet. i. 10.

1 John iv. 12, 20, 21.

whom He hath ſeen, cannot love God whom He hath not ſeen; and poſitively, that *God is* Ἀγάπη *Love* or Charity, *and that He that loveth is born of God, and dwelleth in God, and God in Him:* So abſolutely neceſſary is this Charity to the Salvation of the *Chriſtian* to render him the *Child of God*, and to procure his Entrance into *Chriſt's heavenly Kingdom*.

Conſider *2dly*, that St. *James* expreſsly teacheth, that there is *one Lawgiver only who is able to ſave and to deſtroy*, and thence concludes the Inſolence of them who pretend to paſs a decretory Sentence of this Nature upon their Brethren; where it is worth your Obſervation that He is ſpeaking to thoſe who held, *Acts* xv. 1. that if the *Gentile Believers* were not circumciſed they could not be ſaved, and ſo condemned them to Deſtruction for want of it: This, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, is judging and condemning the Law as deficient and imperfect, ſince it requireth no ſuch Condition of them. Whence it doth plainly follow, that under the Goſpel Diſpenſation to require of any Man as a Condition of Salvation, or to condemn Him as wanting any Thing neceſſary to his Salvation, which the Goſpel of Chriſt hath not directly, or by clear Conſequence made neceſſary to Salvation, is to accuſe it as imperfect, and deficient in declaring the

Terms of our Salvation, and needing another *Lawgiver* to acquaint us with them. Mark 7. 1. Luke 6. 37.

2*dly*, Conſider theſe Words of our great Lawgiver, *Judge not, that ye be not judged; Condemn not, that ye be not condemned:* For tho' theſe Words cannot be reaſonably ſuppoſed to forbid us to paſs that Sentence upon others which God hath paſſed already upon Men, or to ſay unto them, if *you repent not you ſhall periſh*, if *you confeſs and forſake your Sins, you ſhall have Mercy*, this being only to declare from his own Word, what God hath threatned, or promiſed; yet evident it is, that Judgment muſt be here condemned which renders us obnoxious to the Judgment and Condemnation of God; that is, all raſh, uncharitable Judgment, all Judgment paſſed upon the State of others without ſufficient Warrant from God's Word. From the ſame Sermon we learn, that He that ſaith to his Brother *thou Fool ſhall be in danger of Hell-fire*. Now a Fool in the *Hebrew Language* is the ſame as a wicked Man, or one we call an *Hell-hound*: And ſhould we not carefully avoid the paſſing that Cenſure upon others which may befal us on the account of our want of Charity in judging others, according to the *Hebrew Proverb*, *He that calls his Brother Fool, let Him deſcend* with Him *into his Miſery?* I con-

clude with the Words of Mr. *Chillingworth* to his *Popiſh Adverſary*. They who pull down your Authority, and ſet up their own, that declare againſt your Tyranny, and exerciſe it themſelves, are the Men you love to deal with; but upon Men of Temper and Moderation, ſuch as require of *Chriſtians* to believe only in *Chriſt*, and will damn no Man, or Doctrine without expreſs and certain Warrant from God, you know not how to faſten. Let us then in Obedience to the *Apoſtles* Precept, *follow after Righteouſneſs, Faith, Charity, and Peace, with all that call upon the Lord from a pure Heart*, and the *God of Love and Peace ſhall be with us.*

SERMON X.

JOHN xx. 21, 22, 23—

As my Father hath ſent me, even ſo ſend I you. And when He had ſaid this, He breathed on them, and ſaith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt.

Whoſe ſoever Sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whoſe ſoever Sins ye retain, they are retained.

HOW miſerably and perniciouſly theſe Words have been abuſed by the Church of *Rome* to the Subverſion of the Conditions of the whole Covenant of Grace, and in full contradiction

to the whole Tenor of the Goſpel, which frequently informs us that true Repentance which conſiſts in an entire Reformation of our evil Ways, and ſincere Obedience for the future to the Laws of God, are abſolutely Neceſſary for the Obtaining Remiſſion of our Sins here, and an Entrance into the Kingdom of God hereafter, will be exceeding evident to all that are acquainted with the Determination of * the *Council of Trent*, and their *Catechiſm*, and the continual Practice of their *Prieſts*. For as the *Trent Council* hath determined, that Attrition or Sorrow for Sin, produced by a ſervile Fear of Puniſhment, and only upon that Account deteſting it, that we are like to ſuffer by it, with prieſtly Abſolution, is ſufficient to put a Man in a State of Juſtification, and therefore to obtain the Pardon of his Sins; their † *Catechiſm* adds, that the *Way of obtaining Pardon of Sins by true Contrition, that is, by turning to God with a Deteſtation of Sin, and a true Purpoſe to forſake it, is a Thing ſo difficult*, ut a Pauciſſimis hac viâ venia Speranda eſt, *that very few could hope for Pardon that*

* Attritio vel ex turpitudinis peccati conſideratione, vel ex Gehennæ, et pœnarum metu concipitur, et peccatorem ad Dei gratiam in Sacramento pœnitentiæ impetrandam diſponit. Seſs. 14. Cap. 4.

† Quod quidem admirabili conſilio effecit, cum claves Regni cæleſtis tradidit. Part. 2. de confeſſione, Sect. 37.

Way,

Way, it therefore, ſay they, was neceſſary that our moſt merciful God, Faciliori ratione Communi hominum ſaluti conſuleret, *ſhould by a more eaſie way provide for the* common *Salvation* of Mankind, and that is, ſay they, by giving to their Prieſts the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. For the Virtue of theſe Keys, ſay they, is ſo great, that the * Words *Ego te abſolvo, Operate* what they ſignifie, that therefore the Prieſt, ſo truly doth abſolve as to do *id* † *quod Deus ipſe Gratiæ & Juſtitiæ auctor & parens efficit*, the very ſame Thing which God the Author of Grace and Juſtification doth; and, ſay † they, the Voice of the *Prieſt* abſolving legally (that is, not according to God's but their Canon Law) a Perſon from his Sins, is to be received as the Voice of Chriſt himſelf ſaying to the *Paralytick, Son, be of good chear, thy Sins be forgiven thee.*

Our *Non-jurors* have embrac'd the ſame *Popiſh Sentiments*, and have pronounced us of the *Church of Englana* out of the divine Favour, and a State of Salvation, for want of their *prieſtly Abſolu-*

* Ac quoniam Sacramenta id Significant quod efficiunt, *Ego te abſolvo*, oſtendunt peccatorum Remiſſionem hujus Sacramenti adminiſtratione effici. Ibid. de Sacram. pœnit. Sect. 15. † Ibid. Sect. 17.

† Neq; enim aliter accipienda eſt vox ſacerdotis peccata nobis legitime condonantis, quam Chriſti Domini, qui ait paralytico, confide fili, remittuntur tibi peccata tua. Matt. 11.

tions: And all that make theſe Abſolutions not only *Declarative*, but alſo *Operative*, cannot much differ from them: For what can theſe Words, *I abſolve thee from thy Sins*, effect or produce, but the Remiſſion of Sins?

Now that theſe Words, which are produc'd to juſtifie this exorbitant Claim, do properly belong only to *Chriſt's Apoſtles*, and to the Miniſters of the ſucceeding Ages only, as they are Preachers of Repentance for the Remiſſion of Sins, and declare, from the Records they have left unto us as the Rule of Faith and Manners, whoſe Sins God will remit, and will retain. I ſhall endeavour to evince,

1. From the Miſſion of the *Apoſtles* mention'd here, and in other Places, and from the Promiſe made to them to enable them to perform this Work.

2. From the Nature of the Promiſe and Aſſertion, *Whoſe Sins ye do remit, they are remitted; and whatſoever ye ſhall bind on Earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven.*

3. From the Tenor of the Covenant of Grace, which lays down the Conditions on which alone God hath promiſed the Forgiveneſs of Sins, and without which He will not remit them; as alſo from the Abſolutions and Condemnations to be denounc'd

denounc'd by our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt* at the great Day of Judgment. And

4. From the common Opinion of *reform'd Divines*, that their Commiſſion to forgive is only declarative, and the Confeſſion of the *Romaniſts* that their Abſolutions will only become valid when they are made *Clave non Errante*. And

1. That this Commiſſion mentioned in the Text is proper and peculiar to *Chriſt's Apoſtles*, will be evide nt 1.) From the Words of the Commiſſion, which are theſe, *As my Father ſent* Me, *ſo ſend I you*; which *ch.* xvii. 18. is expreſs'd more fully thus, *As thou haſt ſent Me into the World, even ſo have I alſo ſent them into the World.* Now how the *Father* ſent Him into the World, He informs us by ſaying, my *Father ſanctified me* by anointing me with the *Holy Ghoſt*. Accordingly He *ch.* xvii. prays to the *Father* to *ſanctifie* them *to* or *for* the Word of Truth, and in order to that End to endue them with one and the ſame Spirit, *that they all might be one, as He was in the Father and the Father in him*, ſo powerfully working by the Efficacy and Demonſtration of the Spirit, that the *World might believe that thou haſt ſent them.* In the xxivth *Chapter* of St. *Luke*, He informs them that *Chriſt ought to ſuffer and riſe again from the Dead, and that Repentance and Remiſſion*

of

of Sins ſhould be preached in his Name to all Nations, beginning at Jeruſalem, and you my *Apoſtles*, ſaith He, are to be *my Witneſſes of theſe Things*. And in order to theſe Ends, He is ſaid there to open *their Underſtandings*, by the divine Influence of the Holy Spirit, *to underſtand the Scriptures*; and here He *breathes upon them, and ſays, Receive the Holy Ghoſt*, declaring that He would ſhortly ſend them *the Promiſe of the Father*, that is, the Promiſe of the *Spirit of Truth*, infallibly to lead them into all that Truth they were to preach in his Name, and leave in Writing to Believers as their Rule of Faith, and to *bring to their Remembrance, All Things that He had ſaid unto them*, John xiv. 26. Yet becauſe they were not to begin the Execution of this Miſſion, nor had they yet received *Power from on High* to enable them to confirm it *by mighty Signs and Miracles*, and to preach it ſucceſsfully to thoſe Nations whoſe Languages they underſtood not, therefore He bids them *tarry at Jeruſalem till they had received the Promiſe of the Father*, in its full extent, and were then endu'd *with Power from on High*. Hence after his Reſurrection, He ſaith unto them, *Acts* i. 8. *You in few Days ſhall be baptized with the Holy Ghoſt*, and ſhall receive this Power from on High by his coming upon you, and

ye

ye ſhall be my Witneſſes in Jeruſalem, and throughout all Samaria and Judea, and to the uttermoſt Parts of the Earth. Seeing then no *Succeſſours of the Apoſtles*, in ſucceeding Ages, have been thus ſent *as the Father ſent his Son* Chriſt, none of them have been appointed to be *his Witneſſes in Jeruſalem*, and thence *unto the uttermoſt Parts of the Earth*, none of them have received the infallible Aſſiſtance of the *Holy Ghoſt to lead them into all Truths*, or to indite thoſe Records which were to be the Rule of Faith and Manners to all *Chriſtians*, None of them can be ſuppoſed ſo to receive the *Holy Ghoſt* as that they ſhould *remit or retain Sins*, as this infallible Aſſiſtance enabled them to do.

2. And this will be ſtill further evident from thoſe Words, *Whoſe Sins you do forgive they are forgiven*; for as our Liturgy aſcribes this Forgiveneſs to God, by ſaying, *He pardoneth and abſolveth all them who truly repent*, and appropriates it to Him by theſe Words, *To thee only it appertaineth to forgive Sins*, ſo alſo doth the Holy Scripture, in which God himſelf ſpeaks thus to his People, *Iſai.* xliii. 25. *I even I am He that blotteth out thine Iniquities for my own Sake, and will remember thy Sins no more.* And when God promiſeth to *Moſes*, that *He would make his Glory*

paſs

paſs before Him, He doth it in theſe Words, *I am a God merciful and gracious, forgiving Iniquities, Tranſgreſſions, and Sins.* Seeing then He hath ſaid that *He will not give his Glory to another*, we may be ſure He hath not given it to any of his weak Creatures. Hence even *Scotus** ſaith, *that to judge whoſe Sins ſhall be forgiven belongs to the chief Preſident which is God, and that He can no more confer this principal Authority on another, than He can transfer to him his Divinity.* As will be further evident from the Nature of the Thing, for Sin being a Tranſgreſſion of the Law of God, He only can have a right to puniſh it whoſe Law is tranſgreſs'd by it; and ſo He only can retain it who continues the Sinner obnoxious to Puniſhment for the Guilt of it; and He only can forgive it who can abſolve the guilty Perſon from the Puniſhment due to Him for it. Now, ſaith the *Apoſtle, it is God that juſtifieth, i. e.* abſolveth the Sinner from the Guilt and Condemnation due to Him for his Sin;

Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. Eſai. xlii. 8.

Rom. viii. 33.

* Secundo quia judicare eſt præſidentis juxta illud Apoſtoli ad Romanos 14. Tu quis es qui judicas alienum ſervum? primus autem preſidens non poteſt eſſe niſi Deus ſolus; unde ſicut non communicare Divinitatem poteſt, ſic nec primam poteſtatem judicandi, nec per conſequens clavem ſimpliciter principalem. Vid. 41. ſent. diſt. 19. qu. unica, Num. 4, 5.

'tis

'tis therefore God alone who truly, and properly forgives. Now hence it demonſtratively follows, that all the Power which the *Apoſtles* did, or could receive by Virtue of this Commiſſion, was only to declare, what Sins God would remit, and what He would retain, that therefore muſt more certainly be all that their *Succeſſours* could be empower'd to do by Virtue of theſe Words. The great Difference betwixt the Declaration made by the *Apoſtles*, and that of their *Succeſſours* is, that they being aſſiſted by the infallible Spirit of Truth for that End, were commiſſioned to declare to the whole World the Terms on which God would remit, or retain Men's Sins in all future Generations. And hence they ſtile their Writings *the Word of God*, *the Goſpel of God*, and ſay, they were to be received *not as the Words of Man, but as they were in Truth the Word of God*, *the Teſtimony of God*, *the Commandment of God*. Whereas then this Infallibility was peculiar to the *Apoſtles*, they could have no *Succeſſours* in this Way of declaring whoſe Sins ſhould be remitted, or retained. The Power therefore that belongs to, or can be giv'n by a Good, Juſt and All-wiſe God, can be only that of declaring from his Word of Truth, what Sins God hath there promiſed to forgive, and what He hath declared

Rom. x. 14, 15, 17. Col. i. 25. 1 Theſ. ii. 13. 1 Cor. ii. 1. Rom. xvi. 27. 1 Cor. xiv. 37.

clared that He will retain. St. *Cyprian*, * therefore ſaith, *Let no Man deceive himſelf*, Solus Dominus miſereri poteſt, veniam peccatorum quæ in ipſum commiſſa ſunt ſolus poteſt largiri qui peccata noſtra portavit, *the Lord alone can ſhew Mercy, He only can pardon the Sins committed againſt Him, who bore our Sins, Man cannot be greater than God, nor can the Servant by his Indulgence remit, or pardon that which by heinous Treſpaſs is committed againſt the Lord, leſt to him that is fallen this be added as a further Crime, if He be ignorant of that which is ſaid, Curſed be the Man that putteth his Truſt in Man.*

Moreover from a like Argument it may be proved that God only properly *doth bind, and looſe*, and therefore that the *Prieſt* can only do it *declaratively*; for He only can bind a Soul who hath Power to lay an Obligation upon it to act, or to abſtain from acting, or to make a

* Nemo ſe fallat, nemo ſe decipiat, ſolus Dominus Miſerari poteſt, veniam peccatis quæ in ipſum commiſſa ſunt ſolus poteſt ille largiri, qui peccata noſtra portavit——Homo Deo eſſe non poteſt major, nec remittere aut donare indulgentia ſua ſervus poteſt quod in Dominum delicto graviori commiſſum eſt, ne adhuc lapſo & hoc accedat ad crimen, ſi neſciat eſſe prædictum Maledictus homo qui ſpem habet in homine. *De lapſis.* Ed Oxon. p. 129.

Law

Law which immediately, and by his ſole Authority obliges to Obedience; and He alone can looſe who hath Power to diſpence with, and to abſolve from that Obligation. Now that none can give Laws to Souls but God, is hence manifeſt, becauſe He only is the Lord of Wills, and Underſtandings, and only knows when we ſin willfully, and againſt the Dictates of our Underſtandings, and the Conſcience of our Duty. None therefore can paſs Judgment on, or lay Reſtraint on Souls but God; whence it muſt follow, that the Power of the ordinary Miniſters of God's Word, and Ordinances, can only enable them to declare from his Word the Terms on which God will bind or looſe, *i. e*, abſolve Men from the Guilt of, or execute upon them the Puniſhment due to their Iniquities. Now this is a perfect Demonſtration that the *Prieſt's* Abſolution cannot be operative, or produce that Forgiveneſs which the Sinner had before, but only Declarative of what God had done for Him before upon his Repentance. Now no Declaration can make a Thing be what it was not before, but if it be according to Truth, muſt preſuppoſe that the Thing is what we declare it to be; and therefore in this Caſe it neceſſarily preſuppoſes that God hath actually forgiven Him whom we declare

declare to be forgiven. Hence St. *Jerom* on theſe Words, *Matth.* xvi. 19. *Whatſoever thou ſhalt bind on Earth*, &c. ſpeaks thus, Iſtum locum Epiſcopi, & Preſbyteri non Intelligentes, *our Biſhops and Presbyters, not underſtanding the true Import of that Place, aſſume to themſelves ſome of the Superciliouſneſs of the* Phariſees, ut vel damnent innocentes, vel ſolvere ſe noxios arbitrentur, *thinking they can condemn the Innocent, or can abſolve thoſe that are obnoxious to Puniſhment; whereas God enquires not after the Sentence of the Prieſt, but the Life of the Guilty. In* Leviticus, *the Prieſt is ſaid to make the* Leper *unclean or clean, not as He could pollute, or cleanſe, but becauſe He could diſcern, and ſo declare when he was ſo. As then the Prieſt made the* Leper, *clean or unclean, ſo doth the Biſhop or Presbyter bind or looſe, not the Innocent, or Guilty, but only conſidering the Variety of Sinners, diſcerning who of them are to be bound and who to be abſolved.* Accordingly *Lombard ſaith*, * *In remitting, or retaining of Sins the Prieſts of the Goſpel have that Right*

* In remittendis, vel in retinendis culpis id juris & officii habent Evangelici ſacerdotes, quod olim habebant ſub lege legales in curandis leproſis. Hi ergo peccata dimittunt, vel retinent dum dimiſſa a Deo, vel retenta indicant, & oſtendunt.

and

and Office which the legal Prieſts had of old under the Law in the curing the Lepers. Theſe therefore forgive Sins, or retain them, whilſt they ſhew, or declare that they are forgiv'n or retained by God. Lib. iv. Sentent. Diſtinct. 18. F. Hence ſaith our *Homily of Repentance*, Part 2. p. 344. *The Leper was cleanſed from his Leproſy before Chriſt ſent him to ſhew Himſelf to the Prieſt; by the ſame Reaſon our ſpiritual Leproſy muſt be cleanſed*, i. e. *our Sins muſt be forgiv'n before we come to Confeſſion; What need we then to tell forth our Sins into the Ear of a Prieſt, ſince they be already taken away; or can they need Abſolution from the Hands of Man, who are already abſolv'd by God?*

3. This will be further evident from this Conſideration, that God in the new Covenant of Grace has fixed the Terms affirmatively on which He will admit Men to his Grace and Favour; and negatively the Terms without which He will not receive them, but exclude them from his Favour.

AFF.	NEG.
He that believeth, and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved, Mark xvi. 16. John xx. 31.	*He that believeth not, ſhall be damned*, Mark xvi. 16. Joh. viii. 24.

Repentance is *to Life*, Acts xi. 18. To *Salvation*, 2 Cor. vii. 10. *Repentance*, and *Remiſſion of Sins*, Luke xxiv. 47. *for the Remiſſion of Sins.*

He only *ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, who doth the Will of my Father*, Matth. vii. 24. 25. Bleſſed *are they that do his Commandments*, Rev. xxii. 14.

Except ye repent ye ſhall all periſh, Luke xiii. 3. *God is not willing that any one ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to Repentance*, 2 Pet. iii. 9.

To *them that obey not the Truth, belongs Indignation and Wrath*, Rom. ii. 8. *To them who ſtumble at the Word being diſobedient*, Chriſt is a *Stone of Stumbling and a Rock of Offence*, 1 Pet. ii. 8.

Seeing then God hath ſo fully declared in his Word that He will pardon and abſolve all true penitent Believers, and that He will give Life eternal to all his obedient Servants, even to all who *by patient Continuance in well-doing ſeek for Glory and for Immortality*, Rom. ii. 7. and hath as frequently and fully declared that He will not pardon the Impenitent, or Diſobedient, to conceive that God hath put into the Power of any *Prieſt* to diſpence with thoſe Conditions of Abſolution, which He

He Himſelf hath fixed, or to retain thoſe Sins which He hath promiſed to pardon, is the Height of Preſumption, if not Blaſphemy, it being in Effect to ſay, that He will not be true to his own Word, but will ſuffer it to be over-ruled and made of none Effect by the Word of weak and fallible Man. Certain it is, that He who by his Office is appointed to be Miniſter of the Word of Truth, can have no Power given him to do any Thing againſt the Truth of the Goſpel, but for the Truth: It is not therefore to be imagin'd that the Sentence of Man, who is ſubject to deceive and be deceived, ſhould any Ways prejudice, or diſannul the Sentence of God, whoſe Judgment we know to be always according to the Truth. St. *Paul* hath told us that *a Man's Covenant if it be confirmed, no Man diſannulleth*; and can it then be imagined that it ſhould be in the Power of frail Man to diſannul the Covenant which God Himſelf hath ſolemnly eſtabliſhed in his Word. Gal. iii. 15.

Appoſite to this Purpoſe are theſe Words of the good *Bp. of Bangor*, 'God Himſelf 'hath delivered in his Goſpel the Conditi-'ons upon which alone He will pardon and 'accept, *i. e.* abſolve thoſe who have been 'Sinners, all Abſolutions therefore muſt de-'pend upon Sinners coming up to thoſe 'Conditions; they are pardoned if they do *Preſervat.* p. 92.

'come up to them, and they are not pardoned if they do not. To repreſent thoſe 'Conditions to the World, and to declare 'that all Sinners coming up to thoſe Con-'ditions are abſolv'd, is one Part of the 'Office of *Miniſters*; but to aſſume to 'themſelves the Power of abſolving, ſo as 'that particular Perſons may certainly de-'pend upon that Abſolution, is to aſſume 'to themſelves a Power to diſpence with 'thoſe Conditions which God Himſelf 'hath fixed, and to put their Authoritative 'Abſolutions in the Stead of them.

3*dly*. This Doctrine may be further confirm'd from the Tranſactions of our great Judge at the laſt Day. For

(1.) He hath expreſsly told us that then He will paſs the Sentence upon all Men, according to their Works, *whether they be good or evil*, 2 Cor. v. 10. And that then *they who have done good ſhall come forth to the Reſurrection of Life, and they that have done evil to the Reſurrection of Condemnation.* John v. 29. c. 2. He hath declared that this Judgment ſhall be made and executed according to the Tenor of his Word; for *the Word*, ſaith he, *that I have ſpoken ſhalll judge Men at the laſt Day. St. Paul* alſo hath declared that *God will judge the Secrets of Men's Hearts according to his Goſpel*, Rom. ii. 15. then, ſaith St. *John*,

John xii. 48.

John, the Books ſhall be opened, and all Men ſhall be judged according to what is written in thoſe Books, Rev. xx. 12. If then no Abſolution of frail and weak Man can alter the Nature of Good and Evil, or change the Rule or cancel the Dictates of God's Word, by which we muſt be judged at the laſt Day, 'tis certain that their Abſolutions can be of no Force but as they do comport with the final Judgment *Chriſt* will make according to the Good and Evil Men have done in the Body, and with that Rule by which we muſt be judged; and that their Abſolutions cannot procure the Forgiveneſs of any one, whom Chriſt would not forgive without them, nor the Excommunications exclude any from his Favour, who would not have been excluded from it, had no ſuch Cenſure been paſſed upon them. Their Sentence therefore cannot be operative, but only declarative of what *Chriſt* will do at that Tribunal. In a Word, a Judge in this Caſe muſt be one upon whoſe Sentence it is determin'd, whether a Perſon ſhall enjoy the Tokens of God's Favour, or lye under his Diſpleaſure. Thus is Chriſt Judge, He is qualify'd to paſs Sentence as being acquainted with all Circumſtances relating to Men's Sincerity, and upon his paſſing this Sentence the Man's Condition is deter-

min'd irreverſibly, and thus He alone is Judge. Full to this Purpoſe are theſe Words of * *Scotus*, 'An excellent and 'preeminent Power of judging all Cauſes 'with the Firmneſs of a definitive Sentence 'can only agree to him who knows the Me-'rits and Demerits of all, what are the Cau-'ſes for which Heaven is to be opened or 'ſhut, and alſo hath a Will inſeparably con-'form'd to divine Juſtice; by the firſt he is 'qualifyed to paſs Sentence in all Cauſes, 'becauſe He knows them all; by the ſecond 'his Sentence becomes firm and irrevocable, 'as being always juſt. *Hæc Clavis cum 'utrâq; Eminentiâ propriè eſt Chriſti*, this 'Power of the Keys belongs to Chriſt, 'for the fore-mentioned Reaſons, his 'Knowledge of all Cauſes to be judged, 'and the Juſtice of his Judgment; *nec iſta 'poteſt congruè eſſe in Eccleſiâ militante*, nor 'can it congruouſly be in the *Church Mili-*

* Secunda Clavis præcellens poteſt intelligi, quantum ad duplicem præeminentiam, unam quidem Univerſalitate cauſarum judicandarum, aliam in firmitate ſententiæ Definitivæ, et utraq; Præeminencia poteſt convenire illi qui omnia Merita et Demerita novit, quæ ſunt Cauſæ propter quas Cœlum eſt aperiendum vel claudendum. et cum hoc habet Voluntatem inſeparabiliter conformem Juſtitiæ divinæ propter primum poteſt in omnibus Cauſis ſententiare quia omnia novit, propter ſecundum poteſt ejus Sententia ſimpliciter eſſe firmâ et irrevocabilis quia ſemper juſta, hæc Clavis cum utraq; Præeminencia propriè eſt Chriſti qui novit omnia Merita, et demerita judicandorum, et ſemper Juſtitiæ divinæ conformiter judicat nec poteſt eſſe in Eccleſia militante, *&c.*

'*tant*,

'*tant*, becauſe no Perſon there either knows 'all Cauſes that are to be judged, or hath 'a Will immutably juſt, in iv. *Sent.* 'Diſt. 19. *Qu. unica Num.* 4, 5. Laſtly, with this agrees the Words of our *Homilies* of *Repentance*. *Go ſhew thy Self to the Prieſt*, who is a true Prieſt, but He who is a *Prieſt for ever after the Order of Melchiſedeck—we ought to acknowledge no other Prieſt* for *Deliverance from Sins but our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, who being Sovereign Bp. doth with the Sacrifice of his Body and Blood offered once for ever upon the Altar of the Croſs, moſt effectually cleanſe the ſpiritual Leproſy, and waſh away the Sins of all thoſe that with true Confeſſion of the ſame do flee unto Him.* Hence we ſee what Cauſe our good *Biſhop* had to ſay, 'If it 'be a Crime to ſay that all Chriſtians are 'in theſe Matters to be determin'd in this 'World by Chriſt alone, as their Lawgiver, and to have their Conditions in the 'next World depend upon his Judgment, 'and his Sentence alone; I deſpair of 'knowing what we mean by the Juſtice 'of God and the Mercy of the Goſpel, or 'what it is that the plaineſt Declarations 'of Chriſtianity ſet forth, *Anſw. to the* 'Repreſent. p. 48.

Part the 2d. p 345.

4*thly*, This will be further manifeſt from the Conſideration of (1) the Thing

which is preſumed to be done by the *Prieſt*, and that is ſuch a Remiſſion of Sins as may be certainly depended upon by Virtue of theſe Words, *Whoſe Sins ye do remit*, &c. (2) From the Conſideration of the Perſons to whom it is ſuppoſed that this Power is committed; they being (1) too often ignorant of, and unacquainted with the Terms on which God alone hath promiſed to forgive Sins, and always ignorant of the Perſons who truly do come up to theſe Conditions. (2) They being not only fallible and ſubject to Miſtakes, but alſo to ſuch Paſſions, and falſe Principles as may induce them to retain or remit Sins where they ſhould not: And this I hope all *Proteſtants* will grant to be actually ſo, when his *Holineſs*, or their *General Councils*, do retain the Sins of all *Proteſtants* as being *Hereticks* and *Schiſmaticks*, and give a *Plenary Pardon* and *Indulgence* to all that will *extirpate*, and cut them off. Now hence ariſe theſe Demonſtrations againſt this Doctrine.

1. That no Abſolution can be authoritative which is not infallible, becauſe no other Abſolution can be certainly depended upon, therefore no authoritative Abſolution can belong to fallible Men. For ſurely it is ſelf-evident that no one can have Authority to abſolve another, unleſs He whom He abſolves

abſolves is certainly abſolv'd, and that He cannot be certainly abſolv'd unleſs He be infallibly abſolv'd.

2. *Chriſtians* can only have their Sins pardoned upon the Performance of the Conditions God hath made neceſſary for the obtaining of that Pardon; but fallible Men neither know nor can know, without a Revelation, who comes up to thoſe Conditions, who have repented from the Heart, and been ſincerely obedient; and therefore fallible Men cannot have ſuch Authority to ablolve.

3. It is repugnant to many Attributes of God, to ſay that God hath put this Power into the Hands of ignorant and fallible Men; 'tis a Derogation to his Wiſdom to affirm that an All-wiſe God, who perfectly knows who are qualify'd for his Pardon, and who are not, ſhould put this Power into the Hands of Men, who cannot know when they rightly do apply it, and may frequently miſapply it. A God of Truth cannot give Power to Men to act againſt the Truth of his Word. A God of Juſtice, to whom it is an Abomination to *juſtify the Wicked*, and *condemn the Righteous*, cannot bequeath this Power to them who are ſubject to do both, this being in Effect to give them Power *to ſlay the Souls which ſhould not die*, and

and keep alive the Souls that ſhould not live, Ezek. xiii, 26. Laſtly, a God of rich Goodneſs, and a true Lover of Souls, cannot be ſo regardleſs of the Salvation of his Creatures, as to expoſe it to the Paſſions, Ignorance, or Malice of others, or leave his Favour and Diſpleaſure entirely in the Hands of thoſe who perhaps may never diſpoſe of it aright.

4. Moreover this is no new Notion, but the common Doctrine of all Divines whether *Proteſtants* or *Papiſts*, till of late. That it is the common Doctrine of *Proteſtants* will be apparent to all, who will peruſe their Writings againſt the *Church of Rome* upon this Subject: That it is the avow'd Doctrine of the *Church of England* is apparent from that daily Form of Abſolution uſed in our Liturgy, and ſtyled the *Form of Abſolution or Remiſſion of Sins to be pronounced by the Prieſt alone*, for there it is expreſsly ſaid of God; *He pardoneth and abſolveth all them that truly repent*, and certainly He whom God pardoneth, hath no Need of any further Pardon. Nor can it be in the Power of any Perſon to retain thoſe Sins, from which God hath abſolved the Sinner. The Office the *Prieſt* is by God's Appointment to perform is thus deſcrib'd, *He hath given Power and Commandment to his Miniſters to declare and pronounce*

pronounce to his People being penitent, the *Abſolution and Remiſſion of their Sins*, and ſurely what they are commanded by God, to declare and pronounce, muſt actually be done, before they can truly declare and pronounce it done.

Nor can the Form of Abſolution appointed at the Viſitation of the Sick, admit of any other Senſe. For (1) the Miniſter is there appointed to enquire *whether He ſtedfaſtly believe the Articles of Faith*, and (2) *whether He repents Him truly of his Sins*, i. e. whether He will be, or is abſolv'd by that *God who pardoneth and abſolveth all thoſe who truly repent and unfeignedly believe his Holy Goſpel*; then He proceeds to ſay, *that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath left Power to his Church, to abſolve thoſe who truly repent and believe in Him*, i. e. whom God pardoneth and abſolveth, and therefore *by his Authority committed to me, I abſolve thee from all thy Sins.* Since then it is in this very Form declar'd that this Remiſſion belongs only to the true penitent Believer, *i. e.* to Him alone whom God hath pardoned and abſolved, and ſo can need no further Abſolution, 'tis certain that the Authority to abſolve by God committed to his Miniſters, can be only this, *viz.* a Power to declare

declare to his People being penitent the Abſolution and Remiſſion of their Sins.

That this was antiently the Doctrine that prevailed in the Church of *Rome*, appears from what *Arch Bp. Uſher* hath cited from the *Maſter of the Sentences*, declaring that the *Prieſt* cannnot bind or looſe the Sinner with, or from the Bond of the Fault, and the Puniſhment due thereunto, but only declare Him bound or looſed: with whom agree *Hugo Cardinalis*, and nine of the principal Schoolmen cited by Him, *p.* 171, 172.

This alſo follows from their common Doctrine, that their Abſolutions and Excommunications are only valid when they are made, *Clave non Errante*, i. e. when they abſolve them whom God will abſolve, and pronounce Him pardon'd whom God will pardon, it being impoſſible for any Man truly to retain thoſe Sins which God will remit, or to abſolve any from thoſe Sins which God will retain. 'Tis alſo certain that the Keys muſt always err, when they denounce Pardon and Abſolution not according to that Sentence of the Word of God that cannot err; whence it muſt follow that then only they are not erroneous, when they remit, or retain Sins according to the Declarations made by God in *Scripture*.

Laſtly

Laſtly, That this was autiently the Practice both of the *weſtern* and the *eaſtern Churches*, is evident from this Conſideration, that their Abſolutions were expreſs'd in the third Perſon, as being wholly attributed to God, and not as now in the firſt Perſon, by ſaying, *I abſolve thee*, &c. Thus in the * *Ordo Romanus* and the *Pontifical* of the *Latin Church*, the antient Form of Abſolution was this, *Almighty God be merciful to thee, and forgive thee thy Sins.* In the *Greek Church* this Prayer of † *Damaſcen* is ſtill cited, *O Lord Jeſus Chriſt, our God,* ὁ μόνος ἔχων ἐξουσίαν ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας *who only haſt Power to forgive Sins, in thy Goodneſs and Loving-Kindneſs, paſs by all Offences of thy Servant, for thou art the God of Mercies* ὁ ἐλεεῖν καὶ σώζειν καὶ ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας δυνάμενος, *able to ſhew Mercy, to ſave and to forgive Sins.* But

Obj. 1. Here it is objected, that if this be the Import of theſe Words, and they were ſpoken ſo to *Chriſt's Apoſtles* as that they cannot in the ſame Senſe belong to any of their *Succeſſors*, why do we in our Ordination of *Presbyters* ſtill retain this Form of Words?

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* Pontificale Rom. Edit. Rom. An. 1595. p 567, 568.
† Euchol. Græc. Fol. 217. See Arch Bp. Uſher, p. 12. q. 130. 131.

Anſ.

Anſ. To this I anſwer, (1) That we do not uſe the Form which Chriſt here uſed; for we do not ſay to our *Clergy*, *as my Father ſent me, ſo ſend I you*; nor do we abſolutely ſay either to *Bp.* or *Presbyter*, *Receive the Holy Ghoſt*, but to the *Biſhop*, *Receive the Holy Ghoſt for the Office of a Bp.* and to the *Presbyter*, *Receive the Holy Ghoſt for the Office and Work of a Prieſt in the Church of God.* Seeing then the ordinary Gifts of the good Spirit are as neceſſary to the due Execution of the Office of a *Bp.* or a *Prieſt in the Church of God*, as the extraordinary Gifts of the ſame Spirit, were to the Execution of the Office of an *Apoſtle*, nothing can be more appoſite and proper than the Uſe of theſe Words in the Senſe of our Church: For as the Import of theſe Words ſpoken by *Chriſt* to his *Apoſtles* is plainly this, Receive the Holy Ghoſt for the Office of an *Apoſtle in the Church of God*, ſo in like Manner it is ſaid in our Liturgy to the *Bp. Receive the Holy Ghoſt for the Office of a Bp.* and to the *Presbyter*, *Receive the Holy Ghoſt for the Office of a Prieſt in the Church of God* As much then as the Office of a *Bp.* or *Preſbyter* in the Church of God, is different from, and inferior to that of an *inſpir'd Apoſtle*, ſo much the Import of theſe Words, *Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt*, when uſed

uſed in the Ordination of a *Prieſt* or *Bp.* muſt be different from, and inferior to the Import of the ſame Words when apply'd by Chriſt to his *Apoſtles* ſent by Him to preach his Goſpel to all Nations. And this is agreeable to the whole Tenor of our Ordination, and of the Exerciſe of our Miniſtry in the Church of *England*, For (1) they muſt ſubſcribe and declare their Aſſent to her vi*th* Article which ſaith the *Scriptures contain all Things neceſſary to Salvation; ſo that whatſoever is not read therein nor can be prov'd thereby, is not to be requir'd of any Man that it ſhould be believ'd as an Article of Faith, or be requir'd as neceſſary to Salvation.* (2) They muſt declare at their Ordination that *the Scriptures do ſufficiently contain all Doctrines neceſſary to be believ'd in Order to Salvation.* (3) They muſt promiſe not *to teach any Thing, as of Neceſſity to Salvation, but what they are perſuaded may be proved from the Holy Scriptures:* And after all this it is ſaid to Him, *Receive the Holy Ghoſt for the Office of a Prieſt in the Church of God, whoſe Sins thou doſt remit*, &c. And then follows by Way of Explication of the Power, and *be thou a faithful Diſpenſer of that Word, in* which the Terms of this Remiſſion are contained, and of thoſe Sacraments which are either inſtituted for the Remiſſion of Sins, or the thankful Remembrance of the Body broken

broken and the Blood ſhed for the Remiſſion of Sins, what then remaineth for the faithful Miniſter of the new Teſtament to do, but to declare the Terms on which this Remiſſion is promiſed or denyed in the New Teſtament, and the Qualifications requiſite on our Part, that in the Sacrament of Baptiſm we may receive Remiſſion of Sins, or in the other Sacrament lay claim to the Blood ſhed for the Remiſſion of Sins.

Obj. 2. It is further objected, that if this be all the Power committed to the *Prieſt*, He hath no more Power to remit Sin, then a Lay-man hath; and ſo whilſt he continued a Lay-man He might have made this Declaration from the Word of God, as well as after his Ordination.

Anſ. To this I anſwer (1) That as to one Part of this Commiſſion, *viz.* the retaining Sins, it muſt be own'd that all Laymen who have ſufficient Knowledge of the *Scriptures* do it, and cannot chuſe but do it; that is, when they perceive a Man to be a common Drunkard or Fornicator, they may, and muſt if they believe the Scriptures, declare in the Words of the *Apoſtle*, that they who do ſuch Things ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God; but then the Clergy in this have the Superiority above them, that they do this *ex Officio*, by Virtue of a Commiſſion and Authority from God

to

o preach that Goſpel which contains the Terms on which their Abſolution or Condemnation doth depend. The Caſe here is the ſame with that of preaching; every Parent may preach to his Children, every Maſter to his Family, every private Chriſtian may reprove, admoniſh and inſtruct his Neighbour; but He only can do this in a Church Aſſembly to a whole Congregation who hath receiv'd a Commiſſion ſo to do from them who are authoriz'd, agreeably to the Will of God, and the good Order of the Church to give it. The Layman doth it out of Charity, but the Prieſt only doth it authoritatively, and in the Execution of the Office committed to him. I proceed laſtly to the Improvement which may and ſhould be made of this Diſcourſe. And

1. Hence we may eaſily diſcern the groſs Abſurdities, and the pernicious Conſequences which naturally flow from the Doctrine of the *Church of Rome* concerning the Power of remitting of Sins operatively, and ſo as to *effect the ſame Thing as God the Author of Grace doth in* the *abſolving of the Sinner*. For (1) 'tis certain that all who do perform the Conditions of the new Covenant of Grace, ſhall be ſaved, tho' they never be abſolved by a *Prieſt*; for God will certainly be true to his Promiſe, and that they who do

not truly believe, repent, and yield ſincere Obedience to the Laws of Chriſt, ſhall be condemned whoever doth abſolve them, ſince *Chriſt will come in flaming Fire to take Vengeance of thoſe, that obey not his Goſpel.* If then the *Prieſt* in theſe Caſes hath any operative Power to remit or to retain Sins, He muſt have Power to retain the Sins of thoſe whom God hath promiſed to pardon; if to abſolve, He muſt have Power to abſolve them whom God hath declared he will condemn. For Inſtance, Chriſt hath expreſsly ſaid, *If You will forgive Men their Treſpaſſes, your heavenly Father will forgive you: but if Ye forgive not Men their Treſpaſſes, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you.* If then in theſe Caſes the *Prieſt* hath either Power to retain the Sins of Him who from his Heart forgives his Brother's Treſpaſſes, or to abſolve Him from his Sins who doth not do it, then *Chriſt*, to make the *Prieſt*'s Words true, muſt make his own Words falſe. (2) All Puniſhment muſt preſuppoſe a Guilt deſerving it, ſince all juſt Puniſhment is for a Fault proportionable to the Puniſhment; ſo that all retaining of Sin or Excommunication of the Sinner, muſt ſuppoſe Him to have committed Sins worthy of being excluded from the Communion of Saints, and whoſe Sins God doth

Matt. vi. 14, 15.

doth retain, and ſo who would have *lain* under God's Diſpleaſure had not the *Prieſt* paſs'd theſe Cenſures. Again, all juſt Abſolution of a Sinner lying under God's Diſpleaſure muſt preſuppoſe Him truly to have repented of his Sin, for except we *repent, we muſt all periſh.* Now if God pardoneth and abſolveth all them who truly repent, they can need no *prieſtly Abſolution* upon that Account. Demonſtrative to this Effect are theſe Words of the *Bp.* of *Bangor.*

'It is certainly abſurd to ſuppoſe that God hath given away the Diſpoſal either of his Mercies, or of his Wrath out of his own Hands into the Hands of weak paſſionate Men, as ſubject to Errors as their Brethren; to claim a Right to ſtand in God's Stead, in ſuch Senſe as they, with all their Infirmities, Prejudices and Miſtakes about them, can abſolutely and certainly bleſs ſome, or with-hold a Bleſſing from others; and that God is oblig'd to bleſs or not to bleſs with their Voice alone: this is the higheſt Abſurdity, as it puts a Power into the Hands of Men remaining weak and fallible, which nothing but Infallibility can ſupport, and, as I think, is the higheſt Blaſphemy, as it ſuppoſeth God to have placed a Sett of Men above Himſelf, and to have put out of his own Hands the Diſpoſal of his own Bleſſings and Curſes *Preſervat.* p. 78.

Ibid. p. 94. ‘ Curſes. In fine, Whatſoever contradicts ‘ the natural Notions of God, and the De- ‘ ſign and Tenor of the Goſpel, cannot ‘ be true; but to make the Abſolutions of ‘ weak fallible Men ſo neceſſary or ſo va- ‘ lid, that God will not pardon any with- ‘ out them, and that all are pardoned ‘ who have them pronounced over them, ‘ is to contradict both thoſe Notions and ‘ the Tenor of the Goſpel, which expreſs- ‘ ly declareth Men to be in God's Favour ‘ upon their forſaking their Sins, and as ‘ expreſsly reſerves to God the Diſpoſal ‘ of his own Favours, upon his own ‘ Terms, which was always his Preroga- ‘ tive. ’ To proceed now to the fatal and pernicious Effects of this Doctrine. (1) Whereas the Promiſes of the Goſpel, do all depend upon the Condition of Repentance, which imports a Renovation of the inward Man, and a Purity of Life for the future, the Power to abſolve Sinners upon a bare Attrition, that is, upon the Apprehenſion of the Foulneſs of their Sins, and the Fear of being puniſhed for them, not only contradicts the Deſigns of the Goſpel, but alſo miniſters to that Corruption of Manners which abounds in the *Church of Rome:* For who can be ſuppoſed ſeriouſly to ſet Himſelf againſt thoſe Inclinations to Sin which are deeply rooted in

in his Nature, and are powerfully recommended by the Pleaſure and Gain which ariſeth out of vicious Practices, if the Way to pardon is caſt ſo wide open, that a Man may ſin as long and as ſecurely as He will, and yet at laſt upon the ſole Account of this Attrition and *prieſtly Abſolution* may get into a State of Grace, and be pardoned and juſtify'd? What Man will take Care to get Him a new Heart, and a new Spirit, or to *crucify the Fleſh with its Affections and Luſts*, if without all this the *Prieſt's Abſolution* upon his ſervile Fear of Puniſhment, will be ſufficient for the blotting out all his Sins? I verily believe that this *more eaſy Way of conſulting the Salvation of Mankind*, hath been ſo far from obtaining that End, that it hath miniſtred to the Deſtruction of many Myriads of precious Souls, and proved only a more eaſy Way to Hell.

2. Hence let all good *Chriſtians* be exhorted not to rely upon human Abſolutions, in Matters of ſo great Importance to their precious Souls; for where the Conditions God hath made neceſſary to the obtaining his Favour are wanting in us, they are but broken Reeds, and the beſt *Prieſt* upon Earth will be a Phyſician of no Value to us. It may be very comfortable in Caſe of Doubt, or Diſquiet of Conſcience, to repair, as our

Church in her Exhortation doth adviſe Us, to a diſcreet and learned Miniſter of God's Word, who by his Learning fully underſtands the Terms on which God's Favour may be reaſonably expected, and by his Diſcretion fitly can apply them to the Condition of the doubting Perſon; becauſe this tends either to give us Comfort in our preſent State, or to direct us to thoſe good Advices, which being well obſerv'd, will make it ſo. But then this perfectly agrees with, and doth eſtabliſh the Doctrine I have delivered, by teaching that *by the Miniſtry of God's Word He muſt receive this Abſolution*, and not otherwiſe. Let us then ſincerely endeavour to know the Terms on which God alone hath promiſed his Abſolution, *viz.* that *Faith which purifies the Heart, worketh by Love, and is fruitful in good Works*; that Repentance which conſiſts *in ceaſing to do Evil, and in bringing forth Fruit meet for Repentance*; that Obedience which is not partial, but hath Reſpect to all God's Commandments, and Perſeverance in that Obedience to the End: And if by this lively Faith, this true Repentance, this patient Continuance in well-doing, *we ſeek for Glory and Immortality*, we ſhall aſſuredly obtain it.

SER-

SERMON XI.

MATTH. xii. 7.—

If ye had known what this meaneth, I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the Guiltleſs.

1. THE Words here cited by our *bleſſed Lord*, are the Words of the *Prophet Hoſeah*, *Chap.* vi. 6. Whereby the Word (*Zebach*) *Sacrifice*, and (*Holoth*) *Burnt-offerings*, which were Rites and Ceremonies inſtituted by God, as an acknowledgment of his Sovereign-

ty over us, and that we ſhould offer up our ſelves as *living Sacrifices* to God; and under theſe two Particulars, all other outward Rites and Ceremonies of *poſitive Inſtitution* are to be compriſed; they being all of the ſame nature, good, and requiſite to be obſerved, becauſe they were commanded; but not commanded by Reaſon of any antecedent Goodneſs inherent in them.

2. By the Word (*Cheſed*) *Mercy*, we are to underſtand all Acts of Charity, Kindneſs, and Mercy, which are performed for the Good, either of Men's Souls, (as in the Caſe of Chriſt's converſing with *Publicans* and *Sinners to call them to Repentance*, Matth. ix. 13.) or of their Bodies, as in the Caſe of his *Diſciples* mentioned here.

3. It further is obſerved by ſome, that *Sacrifices*, and *Burnt offerings* being of *poſitive Inſtitution*, it could not truly and properly be ſaid, *God would not have Sacrifices*; and ſo theſe Words muſt be interpreted in the comparative Senſe; *I had rather have, or I value Mercy more than Sacrifice*. But both the Words, and the Inſtances to which our *Lord* applies theſe Words, plead for the Negative in this Senſe; that *when both cannot be performed, God would have the one done, tho' by doing of the Act of Mercy, that of Sacrifice*

Sacrifice muſt be omitted. Thus in the firſt Caſe, *Chriſt* plainly neglects the Traditions of the *Phariſees*, concerning the Unlawfullneſs of converſing with *Publicans, and Sinners*; that He might miniſter to their Converſion; and in the ſecond He pronounceth his *Diſciples* Guiltleſs, in neglecting to obſerve the Reſt required on the *Sabbath*, that they might ſatisfie their Hunger; by this ſufficiently declaring, that theſe Words ſhew'd, God would diſpenſe with the neglect of his own *ritual Precepts*, when the Obſervation of them did obſtruct an Act of Charity and Mercy. Hence therefore I obſerve,

1. 'That an outward ritual Obſervation, and ceremonial Inſtitution, ought 'to give Place to Acts of Charity and 'Mercy; and may be lawfully neglected, 'when otherwiſe an Act of Charity, to 'the Bodies or Souls of Men, muſt be 'omitted.'

Our Saviour's ſecond Inſtance to confirm this Doctrine, is taken from the Caſe of *David, and his Companions*, eating the *ſhew-Bread.* Where our *Saviour* plainly owns, that it was neither lawful for *David*, or thoſe that were with Him, to eat of this Bread. It being expreſsly *appropriated* to the Prieſt, by theſe Words, *It ſhall be* for *Aaron and his Sons*; they

they *ſhall eat it in the holy Place*, (i. e.) in the *Holy of Holies*, and yet our Lord allows the eating of this Bread by them, when they were hungry. Whence I obſerve,

Lev. xxiv. 4.

2. That an Act appropriated to the *Prieſthood*, and to be done by them alone, in Caſes of Neceſſity and Charity, may be done by *Lay-men*, or by Men not conſecrated to their Office, according to God's holy Inſtitution; but either wanting in ſomething requiſite by God's expreſs Command, to their Conſecration, or to the Exerciſe of that Office; or elſe exerciſing it, without any divine Commiſſion at all, and againſt the Rules preſcrib'd by God himſelf, and practiſed from the Beginning throughout many Ages. This will be evident,

(1.) From divers Conſiderations, relating to the Office of the *Jewiſh High-Prieſt*, upon the Exerciſe of whoſe Office alone, on the great Day of *Expiation*, depended the Remiſſion of the Sins of the whole Nation; and the conſulting the Mind of God, in difficult Caſes, by the Oracle of the *Urim*. And there was as great Neceſſity, that He ſhould be conſtituted, and conſecrated to this Office, according to God's primitive Inſtitution, as can be ſuppoſed, in any other Caſe of like

like Nature. And yet 'tis certain, that after their Return from the Captivity, the chief Thing requiſite, to the Conſecration of an High-Prieſt, according to the Law of God, was wanting. For by the expreſs Letter of that Law, He was to be conſecrated to his Office, *by pouring the holy Oyl upon his Head*; and hence it is expreſsly ſaid, *Lev.* viii. 12. *That Moſes poured of the anointing Oyl, upon Aarons Head, and anointed Him, to ſanctifie Him*, that is, to ſet Him apart to his ſacred Office. Accordingly, God Himſelf deſcribes Him by this very Ceremony, *Lev.* xxi. 10. *He that is the High-Prieſt among his Brethren, upon whoſe Head the anointing Oyl is poured.* He having a peculiar *Conſecration*, different from the reſt, by pouring the holy Oyl upon his Head. And yet 'tis certain, and is confeſs'd by all the *Jews*, that after their Return from the *Captivity*, this holy Oyl was wanting; and ſo this very Rite, by which the *High-Prieſt* was ſanctifi'd, and ſet apart for that Office, muſt be always wanting, from that time till the ceaſing of his Office.

The like Defect is obſervable, in the Conſecration of the *ordinary Prieſts* to their Office. For *Exod.* xxix. 21. A Mixture is ordered to be made, of the Blood

Blood *of the Sacrifice, and of the anointing Oyl*, which was to be ſprinkled *upon Aaron, and his Sons*, and upon their Garments, and was a Part of their Conſecration. For by this ſprinkling of the Blood, and of the holy Oyl, upon them, and upon their Garments, they were ſeparated to an holy Uſe; according to theſe Words, *Exod.* xxix. 21. *Lev.* viii. 30. *Thou ſhalt ſprinkle the Blood, and the holy Oyl, upon Aaron and his Sons, and He ſhall be hallowed, and his Garments*; and *Moſes ſanctified his Sons and their Garments with it.* And this Practice continu'd without Interruption, from the firſt Inſtitution, 'till the Captivity. In both which Caſes it is evident, that it was only the neceſſary Want of this *holy Oyl*, which hindred their *Conſecration*, according to the *original Conſtitution*; and yet no Man doubts, the Performance of their Office acceptably, notwithſtanding theſe *unavoidable* Defects. Why therefore, in like Caſes, may not others perform the Work of *Goſpel Miniſters*, under the like unavoidable defects?

(2*ly.*) The *High-Prieſt* being conſecrated to this Office, continued in it during Life; this being the continual Practice, from *Aaron*, 'till after the *Captivity*; none being ever removed from it, beſides *Abiathar*, for a Crime worthy of Death.

Hence

Hence * *Joſephus* informs us, that *none who had once received this Office, was depoſed from it, till* Antiochus Epiphanes *violated the Law firſt, by depoſing* Joſhuah, *and placing his Brother in his Room.* And *2dly*, Ariſtobulus, *who tranſlated this Office, from* Hyrcanus *his elder Brother, to Himſelf.* And *3dly*, *Herod*, who removed *Ananelus*, and placed *Ariſtobulus*, a young Man, in his Stead. And from the Time of Ananelus, *to the Deſtruction of the Temple by* Titus Veſpaſian, *no Regard (ſaith,* † *Mr.* Selden) was *had either to the right of Succeſſion, or the Continuance in the Office; but High-Prieſts were both appointed, and removed, at the Will, and Diſcretion of the Roman Preſident*, or of the *Ethnarch, appointed by them, to govern the Nation.*

Now according to our *Modern Cyprianical Divinity* (of which we have not the leaſt Intimation from *Chriſt*, or his *Apoſtles*) all theſe were meer *Uſurpers*,

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* Οὐ γὰρ ἄλλος τις ἀφῃρέθη τὴν τιμὴν ἅπαξ παραλαβών, ἀλλὰ πρῶτος μὲν Ἀντίοχος Ἐπιφανὴς ἔλυσε τὸν νόμον, ἀφελόμενος μὲν Ἰησοῦν, καταστὰς δὲ τὸν Ἀδελφὸν Ὀνίαν, &c. Antiq. l. 15. c. 3.

† Extinctis ita (in Ananelo) Haſmonæis deſiit omnino in Succeſſione pontificali aut juris perpetui aut hereditarii ſeu Sanguinis legitimi haberi ratio, pro Arbitrio vel principum Romanorum, ſive Regum, ſeu ethnarcharum præſidum, Pontificibus qui ſecuti ſunt conſtitutis ſummotiſque *De Succeſſ. in Pontific. Lib.* 1. *Cap.* xi *p.* 336.

and

and not one of them *High-Prieſts*, but *Schiſmatical Intruders*; and the *ſacerdotal Orders* who own'd them, as *High-Prieſts*, muſt be Partakers with them, in their *Schiſm*. All the *Sacrifices for Expiation*, offered by ſuch *High-Prieſts*, and *Prieſts*, muſt procure no *Remiſſion*. And all the People that communicated with them then, and offered Sacrifices by them, muſt communicate with them in their *Schiſm*, and the true *Church* of the *Jews* muſt then ceaſe, or they muſt find out ſome, who diſown'd and refus'd to communicate, with ſuch *High-Prieſts*.

And yet 'tis certain, the pious *Jews* made no Exceptions againſt theſe *irregular High-Prieſts*; and that God himſelf did own them, in the chief Exerciſe of their Office, on the great Day of *Expiation*. For, whereas by his Law it was Death for any to enter into the *Holy of Holies*, but his principal Miniſter the *High-Prieſt*, or for Him to do it oftner, than the *divine Majeſty allowed:* Tho' all theſe *High-Prieſts* did this annually, God never executed any Judgment, on them, upon that Account, or ſhew'd any other Indication of his Non-acceptance of their Service. Tho' the Text ſaith expreſsly, *Lev.* xvi. 32, that only *the Prieſt whom He ſhall anoint ſhall make the Atonement*,

Lev. xvi. 2.

Atonement, and that *this ſhall be an everlaſting Statute to them*, v. 34. Moreover, the *Scriptures* of the *New Teſtament*, make mention of them, as *High Prieſts*; and neither our *bleſſed Lord*, nor any of his inſpired *Apoſtles*, ever reprove them for this Violation of the Law of the *High-Prieſthood*, but contrarywiſe, our *Lord*, being *adjur'd by the High-Prieſt*, breaks off his Silence, and anſwers to his Demand; and St. *Paul* owns *Ananias*, to be the *Ruler of God's People*, *Acts* xxiii. 5. Which He could only be, as being his *High-Prieſt*. And even of *Caiaphas* it is ſaid, that *being High-Prieſt that Year, He propheſied that Jeſus ſhould dye for that Nation*, and this He ſaid, *not of himſelf*, but from a divine Impulſe. If therefore, notwithſtanding all theſe *Uſurpations*, and Violations of the Law, relating to the *High-Prieſt's Office*, all the Exerciſes of their Religion, the Obſervation of their Feſtivals, and the Oblation of their Sacrifices, were perform'd as formerly, without any Sign of God's diſapprobation of them, or any Declaration of our *Lord*, againſt the Authority of theſe Officiators, or concerning the Invalidity of their Office, in order to the Ends, for which it was appointed; becauſe it was not in their Power to help theſe *Irregularities*, and they

John xi. 49, 51.

they lay under a Neceſſity to ſubmit to them; ſurely the like Neceſſity of *Chriſtians*, muſt excuſe the like Defect of a like outward Rite, or Ceremony, in the Admiſſion of Perſons to the holy Functions, requiſite to be perform'd under the *Goſpel Inſtitution*, and cannot annul their Function. And we may have the ſame Reaſon to conceive, that neither *God the Father*, nor our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt* will reject, or diſapprove, of what they do, for want of a ritual Circumſtance. Add to this,

(3.) That the Office of the *High-Prieſt*, as neceſſary as it was, to procure the annual *Expiation* of the Sins of the People, lay ſometimes vacant, for a conſiderable Time. For after the Death of *Alcymus*, ſaith * *Joſephus*, it lay void *for ſeven Years*; and after the Death of *Judas*, *four Years* and during the whole ſeventy Years Captivity, He could perform no Part of his *Pontifical Office*, He having then no *holy Place*, into which He could enter, with the Blood of his Sacrifices. And yet doubtleſs, the pious *Jews* received then Remiſſion of their Sins, without any Atonement, required

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* Διῆλευσεν ἡ πόλις ἐνιαυτοὺς ἑπτὰ χωρὶς Ἀρχιερέως ὄντα. *Antiq. l.* 20. *c.* 8. *p.* 701. μετὰ ἔτη τέσσαρας *lib.* 13. 5.

by

by the Law, to obtain the Forgiveneſs of them; becauſe the Providence of God had rendered them incapable of obtaining that Remiſſion, by Virtue of the Sacrifices the Law appointed for that End. If then, in Caſes of Neceſſity, they muſt obtain this Bleſſing, without the Intermediation of the *Prieſthood*, which, when that Neceſſity was removed, could only be obtain'd, by his Mediation, much more may the divine Bleſſing be in like Caſes obtain'd, without a ritual Obſervation, ordinarily practiſed, in the *Ordination* of a *Miniſter of the Goſpel*. I proceed

2. To Inſtances of Perſons, who perform'd ſacred Offices, without any divine Inſtitution, even ſuch, as regularly could be perform'd by the *High-Prieſt* only. Thus, tho' we read nothing in the Law, of the Appointment or Conſecration of any *Suffragan* or *ſecondary Prieſt*, to officiate on the great Day of *Expiation*, inſtead of the *High-Prieſt*, yet is it certain, and own'd by the *Jews*, that in the Caſe of the *Pollution of the High Prieſt*, by any Accident, which render'd Him incapable of doing his Office perſonally, on the great Day of *Expiation*, they ſubſtituted a Suffragan or *ſecondary Prieſt*, to do it in his ſtead. Thus we read in * *Joſephus*, of one *Joſeph Son of Alcy-*

* Ἐφ᾽ ᾧ ἡ νηςεία ἐνίςατο, καὶ διὰ τόδε ὁ δυνάμενος ἱερεύειν, *Antiq. l.* 17. *c.* 8. *p* 597.

mus, officiating in the Place *of Matthias*; *polluted the Night before by a Dream.* Now ſeeing this Suffragan, was neither appointed by God, nor had He any Conſecration to this Office, nor any other right to officiate, than that of an *Inferior Prieſt*: Hence it ſeems evidently to follow, that in caſes of Neceſſity, an *Inferior Prieſt* may perform the Office peculiar to one of a *Superior Order*.

(2.) Another Inſtance we find in he *Synagogue* Worſhip, where was (1.)* Αρχισυνάγωγος the *chief Ruler* of the *Synagogue*. (2.) *Sheliach Zippor*, *the Angel of the Congregation*, which offered up their publick Prayers to God. (3.) The *Chaſanim*, or *Deacons*; and all theſe were fix'd Miniſters, inveſted into their Offices, by Impoſition of Hands, for Order's Sake.

And yet it is obſervable, *1ſt*, that none of theſe had, or could have any *divine Appointment*, to their Miniſtry; becauſe, as Dr. *Prideaux* has fully prov'd, there were no *Synagogues*, 'till after their return from the Captivity. *2dly*, Tho' the Angel of the Congregation was ordain'd to that Office, yet often others were ex-

* See all this proved by Dr. *Prideaux* in his Connexion of the Hiſtory of the Old and New-Teſtament from *p.* 385 *p.* 386.

traordinarily

traordinarily admitted, to diſcharge that Office; provided, that *they were by Age, Gravity, Skill, and Piety of Life, qualified for it.* 3*dly*, That it is commonly, and I think truly ſaid, that our three Orders in the *Chriſtian* Church, were taken from the *Pattern of the Synagogue*; and then, what Neceſſity is there for a *divine* Appointment of them, more than of the *Miniſters of the Synagogue?* And why may not others, in extraordinary Caſes of Neceſſity, be admitted to perform their Offices; provided, they be *by Age, Gravity, Skill,* and *Piety of Life,* qualifi'd for it? It further is obſervable, concerning Sacrifices; 1*ſt*, that God being a pure Spirit, could not require Sacrifices, on his own Account; the bare Oblation of them could not be acceptable to Him. *Will I eat,* ſaith He, *the Fleſh of Bulls,* Pſal. l. 13. *or drink the Blood of Goats?* Canſt thou be ſo abſurd, as to Imagine, I can either need, or be delighted with ſuch Things? Their *Peace-Offerings* were deſigned, to acknowledge the Goodneſs of the Lord towards them, and the Bleſſings He had confer'd upon them; and they were only pleaſing to Him, when they came from an Heart truly grateful, inflam'd with Love unto the Author of them, and making ſuitable Returns of Duty to Him. And therefore, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *offer*

to the Lord Thankſgiving. When they offered *a Sacrifice for Sin*, they were to lay their Hands upon it, to confeſs their Sins over it, *Lev.* v. 5. and promiſe to do ſo no more. And without this, ſay the Jewiſh Doctors, *the Sacrifice procur'd no Remiſſion.* And hence, in order to His acceptance of their Offerings, for the Remiſſion of their Sins, the Pſalmiſt here requires them, to *pay their Vows, and Promiſes to the moſt High.*

See *Ainſworth* on *Levit.* v. 5.

2. Hence it is well obſerved by Dr. *Pocock*, that theſe Sacrifices, and ritual Obſervances, were only acceptable by Virtue of ſome good Thing they ſignifi'd, and with which they were to be attended, and without which they were not accepted by God; but were accounted vain Oblations; and that it was only ſome good Thing in Him that brought them, ſome pious Frame and Diſpoſition of Mind in Him that offered them, that rendred them acceptable, and well-pleaſing to God. And ſo, when this was wanting, the outward Rite or Ceremony, obtained no Acceptance with, or Bleſſing from God.

3. It further may deſerve to be obſerved, that our *Church*, in Her xxv*th* Article declares, even concerning the *Holy Sacrament*, that it is not the *Opus operatum*, or the outward Performance; but it is only

only on ſuch as worthily receive them, that they have any wholeſome Effect or Operation. Now this ſeems to obtain with greater Strength, in all ritual Performances; that it is not the *Opus operatum*, or the outward Performance of the Rite, but only the pious Diſpoſition of the Perſon, to whom it is applied, that gives it any ſpiritual Effect, or Operation. Tho' then it be not the Piety, or Goodneſs of the Miniſter, which gives the Virtue to the Sacrament, yet if it be the inward Diſpoſition, and pious Temper of the Recipient, where that is wanting, the outward Rite confers no ſpiritual Effect.

And this, indeed, ſeems to have been one great Corruption of *Religion*, and a perverting of the chief Deſign and Purpoſe of it, (which was to render all Men truly Virtuous, and Holy, and thereby fit for Communion with, and the Enjoyment of, an Holy God,) that Men have advanced ritual Obſervances, and outward Performances, into the ſame Neceſſity of obtaining Favour and Acceptance with God, as ſincere Obedience to the Law of *Chriſt*, and Conformity to the divine Nature, in all his imitable Perfections, to which Salvation is ſo frequently, and ſo expreſsly promiſed.

4*thly*, Tho' it be certain, that *Chriſt* ſent his *Apoſtles to baptize all Nations*,

yet it is not certain, that He empowered, either them, or their Succeſſors, to delegate this Power to *Deacons*. The *Ancients* were ſo far from believing this, that they expreſsly forbad all Deacons to baptize; and introduce this, as a Prohibition laid upon them, on this very Account; *that Baptiſm was an Office, belonging only to the Prieſthood.* Διάκονος δὲ βαπτίζει εἰ δὲ προσφέρει *a Deacon*, ſay the *Apoſtolical Conſtitutions*, *doth not baptize, or offer.* And again, Οὔτε Διακόνῳ προσφέρειν θυσίαν, θεμιτὸν, οὔτε βαπτίζειν *it is not lawfull for a Deacon to offer Sacrifice, or to baptize.* And again, *we permit,* μόνον τὸν πρεσβύτερον Διδάσκειν Ἀναφέρειν Βαπτίζειν, *only a Presbyter to teach, to offer, to baptize.* See this fully proved by *Cotelerius*, in his Notes on the Word Ἰσραλεῦσαι, P. 206, 207. Where He introduceth an old Author ſaying, that, 'ſi 'Baptiſma a Minori Clero, per neceſſi-'tatem, traditum fuerit, expectamus even-'tum, ut aut ſuppleatur a nobis, aut a 'Domino ſupplendum reſervetur, *If Baptiſm, in caſe of Neceſſity, be perform'd by the minor Clergy, we expect the event, that what is wanting, either ſhould be ſupply'd by us, or reſerved to be ſupply'd by our Lord.* The Baptiſm therefore of *Deacons*, which is now commonly in uſe among us, can only be of *human Inſtitution.*

L. viii. c. 28.

Ibid. c. 40.

L. iii. c. 20, 2.

ſtitution. It was permitted only in the third Century, from which time, till the *Reformation*, even *Lay-men* were allow'd to baptiſe, in Caſes of Neceſſity; and if any Thing be wanting to that Baptiſm, in thoſe Caſes, we have like Reaſon to believe, *it will be ſupply'd by our Lord.* We *permit none of the Clergy to baptiſe*, ſay the *Apoſtolical Conſtitutions*, οὐ μονοῖς Ἐπισκόποις, καὶ πρεσβυτέροις *but only Biſhops, and Presbyters.* Now, if the *Church* may permit *Deacons*, to execute the Office of a *Presbyter*, in Caſes of Neceſſity; why may ſhe not permit a *Presbyter* to execute the Office of a *Biſhop* in like Caſes? L. iii. c. ii.

Now this Diſcourſe may be improved;

1. To vindicate the Ordinations of our *firſt Reformers* in *France*, *Germany*, and the *Low Countries*, and elſewhere; they lying under an abſolute Neceſſity of being ordain'd by *Presbyters*, or by *Popiſh Biſhops*, whoſe Forms of Ordination, they could not poſſibly ſubmit to, without owning the chiefeſt Superſtitions, and Uſurpations, of the *Church* of *Rome*; and *ſwearing Obedience to the Pope*, in. Words inconſiſtent with, and prejudicial to that Obedience, they owed to thoſe Powers God had ſet over them; as will be fully

evident, from their * Form of Ordination cited in the Margin. For, if in a Caſe of Neceſſity, a *ſecondary* Prieſt, not ordained to that Office, might do the Office, peculiar by God's Law to the *High-Prieſt*; If *David*, and his Company, in a Caſe of Neceſſity, might eat the Shew-Bread, which by God's Law, was to be eaten only by the *Prieſts*; If a *Deacon*, in like caſes, might do the Office of a *Prieſt*; If even Lay-men were permitted, from the third Century to the Reformation, to baptiſe in Caſes of Neceſſity, and ſo to exerciſe that Office, which regularly belonged to the *Clergy* only; why might not *Presbyters*, under the like Neceſſity, be allow'd to do the Office of a *Biſhop*? If, as St *Paul* informs us, *Timothy* received

* Ego N. ab hac hora fidelis & obediens ero Domino N. Papæ, & ſucceſſoribus ſuis, conſilium quod mihi tradituri ſunt, ad eorum damnum nemini pandam, papatum, & Regalia St. Petri adjutor eis ero ad retinendum, & defendam contra omnem hominem, jura, honores, privilegia, & Auctoritatem Papæ, conſervare, defendere, & promovere curabo, non ero in conſilio, facto, vel tractatu in quibus contra Papam aliqua ſiniſtra, vel prejudicialia perſonarum, juris & poteſtatis ejus machinentur, & ſi talia a quibuſcunq; tractari novero, impediam pro poſſe, & quanto citius novero, ſignificabo Domino Papæ, mandata Apoſtolica totis viribus obſervabo, & faciam ab aliis obſervari, Hæreticos, & rebelles Domino Papæ perſequar, & impugnabo, vocatus ad Synodum veniam. Pontificale Rom. in conſecratione Electi ad Epiſcopum. P. 57. Edit. Rom. 1611.

ſpiritual

ſpiritual Gifts, *by the Impoſition of the Hands of the Presbytery*, 1 Tim. iv. 14. As well as by the Impoſition of his own Hands, 2 *Tim.* i. 6. And the Rule in theſe Caſes was, that if any Thing was wanting, *God would ſupply it*; why may we not reaſonably conceive, that God ſhould do it in this Caſe; *The Grace of God*, ſaith the *Greek Liturgy*, *which perfects the Feeble, and heals the Weak, promotes this Man to be a Prieſt.* And what cauſe have we to imagine, that in theſe Caſes He will ſuſpend his Grace for want of a ritual Obſervation? Morinus de ordinibus Sacris, P. 76, 77.

2. Hence alſo doth it follow, that no *ritual Defect*, in the *Conſecration* of a Perſon to a ſacred Office, tho' it be of *divine Inſtitution*, can render the Performances of the Officiator, in theſe Caſes, null and ineffectual. For tho' the *High Prieſt*, after the Captivity, neither was, nor could be conſecrated by the *Holy Oil*, appointed for that End; Nor was He for a long time ſuffered to continue for Term of Life, as by God's Inſtitution He was to do; and as He did in Fact, till ſome time after the *Captivity*; yet did not theſe two Defects diſable Him, from the Performance of his Duty, in an acceptable Manner. And tho' the *Prieſts* after the Captivity, were not conſecrated according to God's primitive Inſtitution,

yet

yet they performed the Office of the *Prieſthood* acceptably; ſo that by their Oblations of the Sin-Offerings, they made an Atonement for the People's Sins. And which is more remarkable, tho' the Remiſſion of the Sins of the whole *Jewiſh* Nation, depended on the Sacrifice offered on the great Day of *Expiation*; and the Pardon of particular Offenders, depended on the Oblation of a Sacrifice for Sin; and the *Apoſtle* ſaith expreſsly, *Heb.* ix. 22. that *without ſhedding of Blood, there was no Remiſſion*, yet doubtleſs thoſe pious Perſons, who died in the *Captivity*, or while the Temple lay in Aſhes, obtain'd Forgiveneſs, without any Sacrifice offered, according to the Preſcript of the Law of *Moſes*. Hence,

3. I infer, that no Form of *external Regimen*, is ſo eſſential to *Chriſtianity*, but that the *Church* may ſubſiſt without it. For if the Church of *Judea* could ſubſiſt without an *High Prieſt* for *four* or *ſeven* Years; if both *High Prieſts*, and *Prieſts*, might regularly ſucceed without due Conſecration, according to the Law of *Moſes*; as they muſt do during the *Captivity*, and when the *Temple*, the only Place where Sacrifices could be offered, was deſtroyed; why may not the *Church of Chriſt* ſubſiſt, without the *Regimen of Biſhops*? And if the *High-Prieſt* of the

the *Jews*, could continue a legitimate *High Prieſt*, tho' He neither had the *Holy Oil* poured upon his Head, nor the Breaſt-plate in which the *Oracle* was placed, *which He was always to wear, when He went into the Holy Place*; why may not *Presbyters*, in like Caſes of Neceſſity, be validly ordained by the *Presbytery?* Exod. xxviii. 29.

4. Hence I conclude, that a *regular, and uninterrupted Succeſſion* of *Biſhops*, cannot be neceſſary, to the Being of a *Chriſtian Church*. For as the *Church* of *Judah* continu'd, during the Captivity, without *High Prieſt*, or *Prieſt* that could officiate; and after the *Captivity*, without that *Oil*, with which both of them were to be conſecrated; and thoſe *High Prieſts* were, after they came under the Power of the *Roman Emperours*, never continu'd for Term of Life, as their original *Inſtitution did* require, but during Pleaſure, and ſo the Office was generally exerciſed by *Uſurpers*, or *Intruders*; nor did *Chriſt* ever blame them upon this Account, becauſe the *Jews* were not acceſſory to this Abuſe and Uſurpation, nor was it in their Power to help it: So was it in the *Chriſtian Church*, the *regular* Succeſſion of *Biſhops* being diſcontinu'd (1.) By *Simoniacal Ordinations*, which by

by their own Rules, are * *meer Nullities*, and yet were commonly practiſed, and complain'd of, for many Ages. (2) When the *Popes* were, for a long time † *Apoſtatici, magis quam Apoſtolici*, and ſuch, as in the Judgment of ‖ *Baronius*, no Man could allow to be *Lawfull Prieſts*. And (3.) * when about fourty Years, they had either two, or three *Popes* together, all excerciſing the Office of ordaining *Biſhops*, viz. *Gregory* xii. *Benedict* xiii, and *John* xxiii. Two of which muſt be Uſurpers. All which are juſt Exceptions, and Prejudices, againſt the Claim of a *regular uninterrupted Succeſſion*; ſeeing a Nullity in Him that ordains, muſt make a Nullity in them that are ordained by Him, *Et ſic deinceps*. Yet ſince the *Clergy* of the following Ages, were not acceſſory to theſe *Irregularities* and *Uſurpations*, nor was it in their Power to

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* Quicunq; ſacros ordines vendunt vel emunt, ſacerdotes eſſe non poſſunt. Decret. *part.* 2 Cauſ. 1. *q.* 1. *per totum.*

† Genebrardi chronologia circa initium. *Sect.* 10. *l.* 4. *p.* 807. *ad Annum.* 901.

‖ Tunc ſœdiſſima Rom. Eccleſiæ facies cum Romæ dominarentur ſordidiſſimæ meretrices, quarum arbitrio intruderentur in ſedem petri earum amaſi Pſeudo; poſtifices---quis enim a ſcortis intruſos ſine lege, legitimos dicere poſſit Romanos fuiſſe pontifices, Annal. to. 10 *ad An.* 4. 12. *Sect.* 14 *p.* 663.

* Vide concil. conſtan. ſeſſ. 10. 12. Epiſc. lincoln brutum fulmen *p.* 44, 45.

help

help them, they cannot hinder the Validity of their Ordination, according to the *Primitive Inſtitution*, by Prayer and impoſition of Hands. And hence the *Biſhop of Bangor* is juſtified, in his Advice to the Laity; *not to be afraid of the Terrors of Men, or the vain Words of regular, and uninterrupted Succeſſion, ſeeing a juſt and good God cannot put the eternal Salvation of his Creatures, upon any Thing, but what He puts in their Power to do, and to be ſatisfied about.* Since the Uncertainty of theſe Things, were they own'd to be neceſſary, would rob Men of all Comfort, and Aſſurance of their future Happineſs. Moreover, our bleſſed Lord hath ſaid, *He that believeth in Me, ſhall never Periſh, but have everlaſting Life. He ſhall enter into Heaven, who doth the Will of my Father who is in Heaven.* That *He is a true Lover of Him, who keepeth his Commandments.* And *St.* Paul, *that Grace ſhall be to all them who love the Lord Jeſus in Sincerity.* The ſame *Apoſtle* promiſeth *Bleſſing and Immortality to them, who by patient Continuance in well doing, ſeek for it.* And ſaith *the ſaving Grace of God, hath appeared to all Men, to teach us, that we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, in this preſent World.* And that *Godlineſs hath the Promiſe of this Life, and of that which*

Preſerv. P. 9, 7.

which is to come. And *St. John* adds, *that bleſſed are they that do his Commandments.* Hence I enquire, Is the ſame *external Regimen* of the *Church* neceſſary to Faith in Chriſt, to the doing of the Will of God, to the keeping his Commandments, to ſincere Obedience, to patient Continuance in well doing, and to Godlineſs? Will not Faith, Obedience, and Godlineſs, be the ſame, under one *External Regimen*, as under another; and muſt they not therefore entitle us to the ſame ſpiritual Bleſſings promiſed? Cannot theſe Things be perform'd as truly, when a *regular Succeſſion is interrupted*, (as it ſtill may be by the Wickedneſs of Men) as when it is not ſo? Why then do Men preſume to make the Salvation of *Chriſtians*, uprightly endeavouring to perform their Duty, depend on any particular *external Regimen*? Or what more abſolute Neceſſity is there, for the Continuance of a *regular uninterrupted Succeſſion*, for the Preſervation of the *Chriſtian Church*, than there was, for the Continuance of a *regular uninterrupted Succeſſion* of *High-Prieſts*, for Preſervation of the Being of the *Jewiſh Church*?

AN

AN *APPENDIX* To the foregoing SERMON;

Proving that there can be no Aſſurance of a regular, and uninterrupted Succeſſion of Biſhops, Presbyters, and Deacons, *from the Days of the* Apoſtles, *to our preſent Times, but rather a ſtrong Preſumption, if not full Evidence to the contrary.*

TO make this evident I ſhall lay down,

1. The Conditions recorded in *Holy Scriptures,* as neceſſary to the valid Ordination of a *Biſhop,* or a *Presbyter,* and ſtrengthned by the Reaſon,

ſon, and Nature of the Office, and the concurrent Suffrage of the *Canons of the Univerſal Church*. And

2. Shall demonſtrate by plain Matter of Fact, that the Ordinations commonly practis'd in the *Church of Rome*, for the laſt *ſix Centuries*, were both *irregular*, and *invalid*, they being partly the Ordinations of nominal *Biſhops*, who had no Right, or Power to ordain; and partly of Men, who for a manifeſt Want of One, or all theſe Conditions, muſt be incapable of being validly ordain'd. And

1. All *Simoniacal* Ordinations were deem'd null and void, both by the *Eaſtern* and *Weſtern* Churches, becauſe *Simon Magus* would have purchaſed the Power of conferring, by Impoſition of his Hands, the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, by Money; hence, by Analogy, all purchaſing of Spiritual Gifts, Offices, and Places, by ſuch ſordid Means, hath ever ſince been call'd *Simony*, and they who offended in this Kind were ſaid to incur *Hereſin Simoniacam*, *Simoniacal Hereſie*.

Inſtructiones Hiſtorico Theologicæ lib. 16. Cap. 6. Sect. 6. p. 781.

Now of this *Simony*, Dr. *Forbes* lays down this Propoſition; 'That the lawful Succeſſion of true *Paſtors* is interrupted and broken by *Simony*, and every Eccleſiaſtical Perſon who is *ſimoniacally* pro-

'promoted, is *Irregular* and of Right 'Alien from the *Prieſthood*, ſuſpended, 'and deprived from his Office, and lies 'under an *Anathema.*" This is prov'd,

1. From the Determination of the *Apoſtle Peter* concerning *Simon Magus* offering Him Money, to receive the Power of conferring the *Holy Ghoſt* by Impoſition of his Hands. For ſince the ordinary Gifts of the *Holy Ghoſt* can be no more purchaſed for Money, than the extraordinary, He muſt be equally Guilty of *Simony*, who offers Money to Purchaſe the one, as He that offers it to procure the other, and ſo *can have no Part, or Portion in this Matter*, nor receive any benefit by any Ordination purchaſed by Money. Hence, ſaith the xxxth *Apoſtolical Canon*; 'If any *Biſhop*, *Presbyter*, or *Deacon* ob-'tains a Dignity by Money, let Him be 'depos'd, and let Him who ordain'd Him 'be cut off from the Communion of the 'Church, as *Simon Magus* was by St. 'Peter.'

2. This will be farther evident from the Conditions required by St. *Paul*, to the due Ordination both of *Presbyters*, and *Biſhops*. For a *Biſhop*, ſaith He, *muſt not be* Αἰσχροκερδὴς *greedy of filthy Lucre* (1 Tim. iii. 3.) And to *Titus* He ſpeaks thus, *For this Cauſe left I thee in Crete, that*

thou ſhouldeſt ordain Πρεσβυτέρους *Presbyters in every City, as I have appointed thee*; if *He be blameleſs, not given to filthy Lucre.* Whence it follows, that He who was ſo, could not be ordain'd according to St. *Paul*'s order, concerning the Ordination of *Biſhops* and *Presbyters.* Hence in the Canon Law, *Pope Gregory* ſpeaks thus; 'That neither they who buy, or ſell 'holy Orders can be *Prieſts*, becauſe '*Anathema* is denounc'd both againſt 'Him that gives, and Him that ſo re-'ceives them, *This is the Hereſy of Simony*, '*Cauſ.* 1. *Qu.* 1. *Cap. Quicunq*; The 'Damnation of *Simon*, involves both the 'Receiver, and the Giver, ſaith *Gelaſius*,' *P. Cauſ.* 1. *Qu.* 1. *Cap. Quos Conſtiterit.* The *Council of Bracara* held *A. D.* 512 ſaith thus; 'Let the Biſhops receive no 'Gifts, but as it is written, *what they* '*freely have receiv'd* as the Gift of God, '*let them freely give*; becauſe the ancient 'Definition of the *Fathers* concerning 'Eccleſiaſtical Ordinations, denounceth 'an *Anathema* both on the Giver and Re-'ceiver, *Cauſ.* 1. *Qu* 1 *Cap. Placuit.*

Moreover, that this was the Doctrine and Practice of the Univerſal Church of Chriſt, that *Simoniacal* Ordinations were in their own nature null, and void, and He that thus adminiſtered them gave nothing,

thing, and He that thus received them received nothing, is evident from the fore-mention'd Canon of the *Apoſtles*, receiv'd by all Churches, and from the Decree of the *General Council of Chalcedon*, extant in the *Code* of *Canons* of the Univerſal Church. For that Canon expreſsly ſays, 'that if any *Biſhop* ordains for Money, and ſets a Price on the ineſtimable Grace, and for Money ordains a *Biſhop*, *Presbyters*, or *Deacons*, or any other of the Clergy, He that ſhall be convicted to have attempted to do this, ſhall run the Peril of his Dignity, and He that is ordained, ſhall receive nothing by that Ordination or Promotion made for Gain, but ſhall be excluded from the Dignity He hath gain'd by Money.'

The Doctrine and Practice of the *Eaſtern Churches* will be farther evident, from theſe following *Canons*, and Decrees, mentioned by *Photius* in his *Nomo-Canon*, viz. xxii, xxiii, Canons of the 6th Council of *Conſtantinople*, which decrees, that if a '*Biſhop*, or any other of the Clergy be ordained for Money, both He that ordain'd Him, and He that is ordain'd, ſhall be depos'd, *for Grace*, ſay they *cannot be Sold*, nor do we beſtow the Sanctification of the Spirit for Money.' The ſecond *Nicene Council*, Canon 5th

declares; 'That He who is ordained 'by this evil Cuſtom, is 'Αλλότριος ἀπὸ τῆς Θεοῦ, καὶ ἐκ πάσης τῆς ἱερωσύνης Alien from 'God, and *excluded wholly from the Prieſthood*,' and proves this, from the *Apoſtolical Canon*, and the *ſecond Canon* of the *General Council of Chalcedon*. *Gennadius Patriarch of Conſtantinople* in a circular Letter, ſubjects ſuch Perſons to an *Anathema*, ſaying, 'Let the Clerk who 'ſells or buys, the Grace of the Holy 'Spirit, be, and He is abdicated, καὶ πάσης 'ἱερατικῆς Ἀξίας τε καὶ Λειτουργίας Ἀλλότριος, καὶ τῇ 'Καθέδρᾳ τοῦ Ἀναθέματος ὑποκείμενος, an Alien 'from all Sacerdotal Dignity, and Miniſtry, and ſubject to the Curſe of an '*Anathema*.' *Taraſius* Patriarch of the ſame See, in his Epiſtle to *Pope Hadrian* declares, 'That by the Precepts of the Goſpel, the *Apoſtles*, and *holy Fathers*, they 'were forbidden to receive any Reward for 'ordaining any to the *Prieſthood*, they pronouncing Him to have fallen from the '*Prieſthood* who buys it with Gold; and 'pronouncing all Eccleſiaſtical Promotions 'void, in which Money interveeneth; accordingly we ſpeak the Truth, obſerving 'thoſe Things, which are canonically deliver'd by the *holy Apoſtles*, and *renown'd* '*Fathers*.

Vide Balſamon in 30 Can. Apoſtol.

Cauſ. 1. qu. 1 Cap. Multipliciter

The Sentiments of the *Weſtern Churches*, have been partly ſhew'd from the

the Determinations of *Pope Gregory*, and *Gelaſius*, and partly from the numerous *Councils*, and *Popes*, which have cenſur'd, and condemned, and pronounc'd ſuch Ordinations void; *V. G.* the Council of *Orleans* in *France*, held *A. D.* 536, declares, 'That if any Perſon by an execra-'ble Ambition, ſeeks to obtain the Prieſt-'hood by Money, *Abjiciatur ut Reprobus*, '*He is to be rejected as a Reprobate.*' That of *Bracara*, i. e. Braga in *Portugal* held *A. D.* 572 ſpeaks thus; 'The antient De-'finition of the *Fathers* concerning Ec-'cleſiaſtical Ordinations decrees, that both 'the Giver, and Receiver of Money ſhall 'be under an *Anathema.*' The 4th Council of *Toledo* in *Spain*, Canon xviiith, in the Number of thoſe who are, *Irregulares & Indigni Sacerdotio*, *Irregular* and *unworthy of the Honour of the Prieſthood*, thoſe who endeavour to gain it by Gifts are placed firſt. In the Year of our Lord 1049 *Clemens* the ſecond held a Council at *Rome* againſt *Simoniacks*, and *A. D.* 104 *Leo* the ixth held another in the ſame Place, in which Synods it was decreed, 'That all Simoniacal Ordinations ſhould 'be void; on which Occaſion, ſaith *Petrus* '*Damiani*, a ſeditious Tumult aroſe a-'mong the Multitude of *Roman Prieſts*, 'ſo that it was ſaid, not only by them,

'but by moſt *Biſhops*,' That the Church would be deſtitute of Sacerdotal Offices, and the Solemnities of the Maſs would be wholly omitted, to the Subverſion of the *Chriſtian Religion*, and the Deſpair of all the Faithful every where; ſo that they were forced to decree that they ſhould remain in their Offices, doing Penance for their *Simony* forty Days. *Binno To.* vii. *P.* 229. See farther of this in Dr. *John Forbes*, *Tract de Simonia*, *Chap.* vi, ix, x, xii. and in *Gratian Decret. parte Secunda*, *Cauſ.* 1. *Qu.* 1. *a Cap.* 1. *ad Cap.* 22. Now hence it demonſtratively follows, that moſt of the Ordinations perform'd by the Church of *Rome* were null and void, and conferr'd no *Prieſthood*, they being too often *Simoniacal*, from the ixth to the xvith Century. For the Continuator of *Eutropius*, declares, that in the time of *Sergius* the *ſecond*, *Simony ſo prevail'd*, *that Biſhopricks were ſold publickly*, *and that He had them*, *who gave moſt.* So *Vignerius*, *P.* 212. 'How very filthy 'was the Face of the *Roman Church*, ſaith 'Cardinal *Baronius*, when the moſt powerful, and ſordid Whores then ruled at 'Rome, at whoſe Pleaſure Sees were 'chang'd, and Biſhopricks given,' And, which is horrible to hear and moſt Abominable, their Gallants were intruded into the

Cent. ix.

Cent. x.

the See of *Peter*, and made *falſe Popes*; for who can ſay they could be *lawful Popes*, who were intruded by ſuch Whores without Law. There was then no mention of the Election, or Conſent of the Clergy, the Canons were ſilent, the Decrees of *Popes* ſuppreſs'd, the ancient Traditions proſcrib'd, Luſt, arm'd with the ſecular Power, challeng'd all Things to it ſelf. *Annal.* To. xii. *A. D.* 912. Artic. 8.

Platina in the Life of *Sylveſter* iiid ſaith, 'The *Popedom* was come to that 'paſs, that not He that excell'd in Virtue 'and Holineſs of Life, but He that was 'moſt Ambitious, and *gave moſt*, only 'obtain'd that Degree of Dignity, good 'Men being oppreſs'd, and rejected.' Cent. xi.

Glaber the Monk informs us, that the *Emperour Henry the ſecond* having conven'd all his *Arch-Biſhops*, and *Biſhops* in *France*, and *Germany*, told them, 'That all Eccle-'ſiaſtical Degrees, even from the *Popedom* 'to the *Door-Keepers*, were oppreſſed with 'damnable *Simony*, and that this Spiritual 'Robbery obtain'd in all Places: And 'that the *Biſhops* not being able to deny 'this Charge, fled to the *Emperour's* 'Mercy, who ſaid to them, go your 'way, and what you have unlawfully 'obtained, endeavour to diſpoſe of well. Cent. xi.

'He adds, that a Boy of ten Years old 'was choſen *Pope*, by a great Summ of 'Money, and that the other *Prelates* of 'thoſe Times, were exalted to their 'Thrones, rather by Gold and Silver, 'than by Merit, and that this worſt of 'Evils ſprung up, not only amongſt the '*French Biſhops*, but thro' all *Italy*, all 'Eccleſiaſtical Preferments being at that 'time ſet to Sale, as commonly as ſecular 'Wares were in the Market, *Hiſt. L.* iv. '*c.* 5. *L.* v. *ch.* 5. '*Sigonius* ſaith, That, 'thro' the Connivance of the *Popes*, the '*Biſhops* conferr'd the minor Orders not 'out of Reſpect to Virtue, but the Con-'dition of Reward; and that the Clergy 'ſo ordain'd had openly Wives and Con-'cubines, both which Diſhoneſties they 'defended, by pleading Cuſtom for 'them, and ſo they fell into two grievous '*Hereſies*, one of the *Simoniacks*, and 'the other of the *Nicolaitans*. *De Regno* '*Italiæ l.* viii. *P.* 202. *Edit Francofurt.* '*A. D.* 1575.'

Cent. xii. In this Century *Hugo Flaviacenſis* complains, 'That all the Clergy rather *ſought* '*their own*, than *the Things of Jeſus* '*Chriſt*, and choſe rather to adhere to 'the Diſcipleſhip of *Simon*, than to the 'Poverty of Chriſt'. *Chron. Verdun P.* 207. *Concil.* To. x. *P.* 375. *Honorius Auguſto-*

Auguſtodivienſis ſaith, 'That the *Popes*, 'Cardinals, and *Prelates* at *Rome*, made 'Port-Sale *of Things ſacred*, and purcha-'ſed that which is wicked.' *lib* iid. *de Præ-deſt. et lib. Arbitrio.*'

St. *Bernard* in his Comment on *Pſ.* xixth ſaith, 'That the Offices of Eccleſiaſtical 'Dignity are turn'd into filthy Lucre, 'and a Work of Darkneſs.' In his Ora-tion of the Converſion of St *Paul*, T 20, He adds, 'That now all Eccleſiaſtical 'Degrees are given as an Occaſion of 'filthy Lucre, and they account gain 'Godlineſs.' In his Book of Conſidera-tions written to *Pope Eugenius*, He inſinuates, that 'Ambitious, Covetous, 'Sacrilegious, Simoniacal, Inceſtuous 'Perſons, Fornicators, and ſuch like 'Monſters of Mankind, flow'd from all 'Parts of the World to *Rome*, that by 'the *Apoſtolical Authority* they either 'might obtain, or keep Eccleſiaſtical Ho-'nours; and puts this Queſtion to the 'Pope, Who is there of that whole great 'City, who receiv'd thee as *Pope*, with-'out the intervention of ſome Price, or 'hopes of Price? Theſe, ſaith He, are 'rather Paſtors of Devils, than of Sheep.' *John Biſhop of Sarum*, being commanded by *Pope Hadrian* the ivth to tell Him what Men thought of Him, and of the Church, Cent. xii.

Church, ſpeaks thus, ‘ The common ‘ talk of them all was, that they counted ‘ Gain Godlineſs, and rendred Juſtice, ‘ not according to Truth, but Gifts re- ‘ ceived; that Men might obtain any ‘ Thing of them for a Gift to Day, and ‘ nothing without Gifts to Morrow.’ *Polycrat. lib.* vi. *c.* 24. *P.* 386. *Ed. Lugd. Bat.* 1638.

Cent. xiii. *Mathew Paris* ſpeaking of the miſerable Eſtate of the *Church of England*, ſaith, then *Simony was committed without ſhame*, *P.* 438; and of *Pope Innocent* He ſaith, *P.* 327, ‘ That He was ambitious and ‘ proud above all Mortals, one who inſa- ‘ tiably thirſted after Money, and was ‘ prone and ductile to all kinds of Wicked- ‘ neſs for Promiſes, and Rewards.’

Cent. xiv. *Marſilius of Padua*, who flouriſh'd in this Century ſaith, ‘ That Men ignorant ‘ of the *Holy Scriptures*, undiſciplined, ‘ and notoriouſly Criminal, were placed ‘ in the higheſt Thrones of the Church ‘ by *Simony*’ *P.* 355, 356; ‘ That the *Car-* ‘ *dinals* open'd to Idiots and Men of per- ‘ verſe Manners, the Door of *Simony*, *P.* ‘ 357. That they who have viſited the Cent. xiv. ‘ Church of *Rome*, may ſee plainly, and ‘ they who were never there may learn from ‘ an infinite Number of Men of Credit, ‘ that it is become a Receptacle of all

Rogues

'Rogues and *Trickers*, *for all Wares both* 'Spiritual *and Temporal.* For what is 'there but a Concourſe of *Simoniacks* from 'all Places, *p.* 362. *Albarus Pelagius* ſpends a large Part of his ſecond Book *De Planctu Eccleſiæ* upon this Subject, 'complaining of the *Popes*, that many 'of them came into their Sees by *Simony*; 'of the *Biſhops*, that they confer'd 'Orders for Rewards, and were *Simoniacal*, eſpecially in *Spain*, where not one 'of an hundred conferr'd Orders, or Benefices without Simony; of the *Preſbyters* that they were commonly promoted by *Simony*; and laſtly of the Church 'in General, that her *Prelates* did nothing now but by Gifts and Rewards.'

In this Age *Nicolaus de Clemangis* writ a Book of *Simoniacal Prelates*, where, ſaith He, 'There be very many Things in 'our *Biſhops* worthy of Reprehenſion, 'but this is leaſt of all to be endur'd, 'that for Impoſition of Hands, Collation 'of Orders ſacred, and Inferiour, they 'do not only receive, but exact, and 'extort Money, ſetting a Price upon all 'Orders, which if it be not paid, they 'will admit no Perſons into Orders, tho' 'He be never ſo well qualifi'd by his 'Life, Manners, or his Learning. The 'Church is now become a Shop of Merchandiſe, or rather of Robbery and 'Rapine, Cent. 15.

'Rapine, in which all the Sacraments 'are expoſed to Sale. Would a Man 'have a *Biſhoprick?* He muſt provide 'his Money. Doth He deſire a Prebend, 'or any other Dignity? It is no matter 'what his Life, Merit, or Converſation 'be, but the great Queſtion is, what 'Money He may have to buy it. He 'adds, that no Man was admitted into 'the Clergy, or ſacred Orders, or any 'eccleſiaſtical Degree, without Rewards, 'which, ſaith He, is intolerable.' *Gerſon* Cent. 15. who lived in the ſame Century complains, 'That Biſhops of good Life and Doctrine 'were not choſen any where, but carnal 'Men, and ignorant of ſpiritual Things, 'and that their eccleſiaſtical Preferments 'were obtain'd by *Simony*.' *Declarat. de delectu virorum Eccleſiaſtic.*

Now to ſum up this Argument; (1.) Since an inſpir'd *Apoſtle* hath declar'd this to be one neceſſary Qualification of Him that is to be ordain'd a *Biſhop* or a *Presbyter*, that He muſt not be *deſirous of filthy Lucre*, as certainly all Perſons who buy and ſell theſe Offices muſt be; ſince by the conciliar Determinations, Judgment, and Practice of the *Univerſal Church*, ſuch Ordinations were made null and void, ſo that He who *Simoniacally* confers ſuch Orders, gives nothing, and He who ſo receives them, receives nothing;

thing; ſeeing laſtly, the Ordinations of *Popes*, *Biſhops* and *Presbyters* in the Church of *Rome*, for ſix hundred Years were very frequently *Simoniacal*, and ſo conferr'd upon them no *Sacerdotal Power*, and ſo could give them no Authority to confer this Power upon others: Hence doth it neceſſarily follow, that at the Beginning of the Reformation, it is utterly uncertain, whether there were any *Biſhops*, or *Prieſts* in that Church, or who thoſe *Biſhops* and *Prieſts* were; and 'tis as evident that what can be never made known, or certain, or even probable, after ſo long Continuance of Ordinations *De jure et de facto* null and void, can never, by divine Inſtitution, be made neceſſary, either to the Being, or the well-Being of the Church of Chriſt.

(1.) A *Biſhop*, ſaith St. *Paul*, muſt be Arg. i.
Ἀνεπίλημπτος, *unblameable*, in Life and Converſation; 1 *Tim.* iii. 2. *A Presbyter* muſt be Ἀνέγκλητος, *of a Life unreprovable*; *Tit.* i. 7. Hence in the Canons of the *Catholick Church*, He that had committed, Can. ii.
Ἁμάρτημα τι ψυχικὸν *any carnal Luſt*, Παυέσθω ὁ τοιοῦτος τοῦ Κλήρου *muſt ceaſe*, ſaith the *firſt Nicene Council*, *from being of the Clergy*. And He that was Προσημαρτηκὼς τῷ Σώματι *Guilty of a Sin againſt the Body before Ordination*, μὴ προσφερέτω, *let Him not offer*, Can. ix.
ſaith the *Council* of *Neocæſarea*. If any *Presbyter*,

Can. ix. *Presbyter*, ſaith the ſame *Nicene Council*, be promoted without Examination, or upon Examination hath confeſſed his Sins, and yet hath been ordained againſt the *Canon*, the Canon admits not of ſuch Perſons; τὸ γὰρ Ἐπιλημπτον ἐκδίκει ἡ Καθολικὴ Ἐκκλησία *for the Catholick Church puniſheth what is blame-worthy.* And the next Canon adds, that if any one, who had lapſed afterwards thro' Ignorance or Diſſimulation, were ordained, ſuch according to the eccleſiaſtick Canon *were to be depoſed.*

(2.) A *Biſhop*, ſaith the ſame *Apoſtle*, muſt be διδακτικὸς a Perſon *apt to teach*; a *Presbyter*, one *holding forth the faithful Word*, as *He hath been taught, that He may be able by ſound Doctrine to exhort, and to convince the Gainſayer.* 1 Tim. iii. 2. *Tit.* i. 9. Hence doth He charge his Son *Timothy, to commit the Things which He had heard from Him, to faithful Men, who ſhould be able to teach others alſo,* 2. Tim. ii. 2. Accordingly the Canon of the *Council of Laodicea* declares, that they only are to be admitted, εἰς Ἐκκλησιαστικὴν Ἀρχὴν *to the Government of the Church, who have been long exerciſed* ἐν τῷ Λόγῳ τῆς Πίστεως *in the Word of Faith.* St. *Chryſoſtom* and, *Theophylact* here ſay, that τὸ Διδασκαλικὸν or *an Ability to Teach*, is *the chief Character of a Biſhop*, and thro' all Ages of the Church, Enquiry hath

hath been made, whether they who came to be ordained, were thus fit to be admitted *Prieſts*, or *Biſhops*; it being incongruous to ſay to them, who were not capable to do it, *Take thou Authority to Preach*, &c. It alſo ſeemeth as abſurd to ſay to an Idiot, who lies under a moral Incapacity to teach, *take thou Authority to Preach the Goſpel*, as to ſay this to a *deaf and dumb Man*, who lies under a natural Incapacity to do it, ſeeing a moral Incapacity, whilſt it laſts, renders a Man as Incapable of Teaching, as a natural Incapacity.

And yet it is certain, from the Account which the beſt and moſt able Men from the xiith to the xvith Century have given us, that in the Church of *Rome*, Orders were frequently conferr'd on *Presbyters* and *Biſhops*, who were then guilty of heinous Crimes, and ſcandalous Offences, and who were groſsly ignorant of what they ought to teach to others. For

St. *Bernard* complains, 'That ambitious, 'covetous, ſimoniacal, ſacrilegious, in- Cent. xii. 'ceſtuous Perſons, Fornicators, and ſuch 'like Monſters of Mankind did flow 'together from all Parts of the World, 'to obtain eccleſiaſtical Honours.' And '*Jacobus de Riberia*, that when the *Wal-* '*denſes* prevail'd in *France* and other Places, 'the

'the *Biſhops Prieſts* and *Miniſters* of the 'Church were then in ſmall Eſteem, as 'being unworthy, and *ignorant almoſt of* '*all Things.*

Cent. xiii. *Petrus Bleſſenſis* in his xxiiid *Epiſtle* cries out; 'How did this excecrable 'Preſumption prevail, that unworthy 'Perſons ſhould thus graſp at Dignity, 'and the leſs they deſerved ſuch Ho-'nours, the more earneſtly ſhould thruſt 'themſelves into them. For now un-'happy Men do thruſt themſelves into 'the Paſtoral Chair by Right or by 'Wrong; He that hath learned nothing 'becomes a Teacher of others, and tho' 'He be like the *ſounding Braſs and tinkling* '*Cymbal*, He uſurps the Office of a 'Teacher, being an *unprofitable Trunk*, '*and a dumb Idol.*

Cent. xiv. In this Century *Marſilius* of *Padua* complains, 'That the *Pope* out of the 'plenitude of his Power, rejects, and 'nulls the Elections of ſufficient, and 'approved Men to almoſt all eccleſiaſti-'cal Dignities, tho' rightly made; and in 'their ſtead appoints Men ignorant of 'the *Holy Scriptures*, *Idiots*, unlearned 'Perſons, and for the moſt part Men of 'corrupt Minds, and notoriouſly wicked. 'Our modern *Biſhops* (which it is a 'ſhame to ſay) neither know how to 'preach the Word of God to the People,

nor

'nor to reſiſt the Doctrine of the *Here-*
'*ticks*: And as for the reſt of the inferi-
'or *Prelates*, *Abbots*, *Priors*, and other
'Curates of the Church, I call God to
'witneſs, that the numerous Multitude
'of them are both void of ſufficient
'Learning and Life, ſo that the moſt of
'them know not how to ſpeak congru-
'ouſly, according to the Rules of Gram-
'mar; but yet out of the Fulneſs of the
'*Pope*'s Power, the greateſt Dignities are
'given to ſuch as theſe: And of the *Car-*
'*dinals* he ſaith, that laſcivious young
'Men, and ignorant of the *holy Scrip-*
'*tures*, are many of them promoted to
'that Dignity. *Defenſor pacis*, *l.* 2. *c.* 14.
'*p.* 354. *Alvarus Pelagius*, *l.* 2. *de planctu*
'*Eccleſiæ*, *c.* x. complains of the *Biſhops*,
'that they conferr'd Benefices on unwor-
'thy Perſons; this, ſaith he, is ſo com-
'mon in our Times, that they ordained
'Men whom they knew to be unlearned
'and unfit, *c.* 3. That being *Idiots* they
'ſuffered themſelves to be made *Biſhops*;
'and *c.* 4. that they promiſcuouſly or-
'dained good and bad; and *c.* 27, of the
'*Presbyters* he complains, that they com-
'monly offended, by ſuffering themſelves
'to be ordained when they were un-
'worthy.

Cent. xv. *Nicolaus de Clemangis* in his Book of *Simoniacal Prelates*, after the Words forecited of their vile *Simony*, ſaith, 'Therefore you may ſee ſuch Men admitted to 'the *Prieſthood*, and other holy Offices, 'who are *Idiots*, unlearned, and ſcarce 'able to read, tho' waywardly, and without underſtanding one Syllable after 'another, who know no more of *Latin* 'than they do of *Arabick*, who when 'they read, pray or ſing, know not whether they bleſs God or blaſpheme him, 'Men undiſciplin'd, unquiet, Gluttons, 'Drunkards, Praters, Vagabonds, luſtful, bred up in Luxury, and in one 'word, idle and ignorant, *chap.* 1. In his Book *of the corrupt State of the Church*, he adds, 'That the *Pope* had ſtock'd the 'Church with ignorant and wicked Men: 'Good God! ſaith he, how great a Number of Expectants from that Time (that 'he had taken away from the Dioceſans 'and Patrons the Liberty of Preſentation 'to their Benefices) came in, not from 'their Studies or the Schools, but from 'the Plow and ſervile Arts, to become 'Pariſh Prieſts, and to obtain other Benefices, who knew no more of the *Latin* than the *Arabick* Tongue, who could 'not read, and (which it is a Shame to 'ſpeak of) ſcarce knew A from B; and

'yet

'yet their Immorality was greater than 'their Ignorance, *chap.* xi, xii, xiii, xiv, 'He adds, that thro' the Avarice, *Simo-'ny*, and other Vices of the *Cardinals*, it 'came to paſs that no Man learned in 'the *Scriptures*, no honeſt, juſt and vir-'tuous Perſons were advanced to high 'Dignities, but Buffoons, only, Flatterers, 'ambitious Perſons, and Men corrupted 'with all Vices, ſo that they either whol-'ly were unlearned, or they knew no-'thing of God's Law; that being Youths 'without Beards, and ſcarce got from 'under the Ferula, they obtained a *Bi-'ſhoprick*, knowing as little of that Office 'as of the Mariner's Vocation. What 'ſhould I ſpeak, ſaith he, of the Learn-'ing of the *Prieſts*, when it is viſible that 'ſcarce any of them can read? They 'know not Words, and much leſs Things. 'He of them that prayeth is a *Barbarian* 'to himſelf; if any Man is idle, and ab-'hors Labour, if he loves Luxury, he gets 'now a-days into the *Clergy*, chap. xxv. *John Gerſon* complains, 'that *Biſhops* of 'good Life and Doctrine were not choſen 'any where, but carnal Men, and igno-'rant of ſpiritual Things. *Lib de delect. virorum Eccleſiaſticorum.*

Clemangis informs us, 'that there were Cent. xvi. 'ſcarce any advanced to the *Pontifical*

'Dignity, who had ſo much as ſuperficially either read or heard or learned the '*Scriptures*, or who had ever touch'd any 'thing of the Bible, except the Cover. 'And *Narenus*, who writ when the *Trent* '*Council* was ſitting, ſaith, it was the 'Cuſtom of that Age to confer the Office 'of a *Biſhop* or a *Prieſt* upon the moſt unlearned and irreligious Perſons, and that 'their *Biſhops* then, few only excepted, 'were more ignorant of the *Scriptures* 'than the People.

Now from the Account here given by the moſt knowing and able Perſons of thoſe Times, it is extremely evident, that Perſons ſo enormouſly vicious, and ſo groſly ignorant, ought not, by the Canons of the *Church Catholick*, or the Preſcriptions of an *inſpir'd Apoſtle*, to have been admitted to holy Orders, and that they, who ought to have been excluded for Inſufficiency, or for Irregularity, could have no reaſon to expect that the Divine Grace, which chiefly operates in Eccleſiaſtical Ordinations, ſhould be confer'd on Perſons ſo entirely unworthy of it, and ſo deficient in the Things requiſite by the Rules of *Scripture*, and of the univerſal Church, for the obtaining it.

To

To this Effect it is obſerved by a *learned Biſhop*, 'That the Gifts and Abi- 'lities of Church Officers are every where 'throughout the New Teſtament diſtin- 'guiſhed from their Commiſſion, and de- 'ſcribed as previous Qualifications to it, 'particularly that *Biſhops* and *Presbyters* 'are required to have ſeveral Qualificati- 'ons, and to give ſufficient Proof of them, 'and after that to wait for a Commiſſi- 'on, before they preſume to govern the 'Church. Whence it demonſtratively follows, that they who wholly wanted theſe previous Gifts and Qualifications, required by God to fit them for theſe Offices, could not be fitted to receive a Commiſſion to govern the Church, and that he who appointed thoſe antecedent Abilities and Qualifications, and a ſufficient Proof of them to precede that Commiſſion, could not give Authority to any Perſon to confer that Commiſſion where they were wholly wanting.

Biſhop Potter, chap. 5 p. 218, 220.

Mr. *Stebbing* in his Remarks, *p.* 3. owns that *a regular Succeſſion is ſuch a Succeſſion in the Miniſtry as is agreeable to the Rule or Method which God hath appointed for the Conveyance of the Miniſterial Office.* And p. 14 he acknowledgeth *a Rule according to which the Miniſterial Office ought of Right, according to the Will and the Appointment of God, to be conveyed.*

ed? Let him then ask his Conſcience whether he can reaſonably judge that all theſe Ordinations of Perſons *ſimoniacal*, *notoriouſly wicked*, and *groſly ignorant*, were Ordinations performed *agreeably to this Will, Rule and Method by God appointed for the Conveyance of the Miniſterial Office* throughout all Ages of the Church. And if he dares not aver this, whether *God's Rule and Method for the Conveyance of the Miniſterial Office* hath not been interrupted by them?

How early theſe Corruptions began, he may learn from St. *Jerom*'s Deſcant on theſe Words of St. *Paul*'s Epiſtle to *Titus*: *That thou mighteſt ordain Elders as I have appointed thee*, viz. 'Let the Biſhops, who 'have the Power of conſtituting Presby-'ters in every City, learn hence under 'what Law the Order of Eccleſiaſtical 'Conſtitutions is to be maintained; nor 'let them look upon theſe Words as the 'Words of the *Apoſtle*, *but of Chriſt*: 'Whence it is manifeſt, that they who, '*contemning the Law of the Apoſtle*, con-'fer the Eccleſiaſtical Order not by Me-'rit, but by Favour, *act contrary to the* '*Will of Chriſt*, who by his *Apoſtle* here 'taught us the Qualifications of him who 'is to be ordained a *Presbyter* in the 'Church. But now we ſee that many (*Biſhops*) convert this thing into a Benefit,

or

or Matter of Favour, not ſeeking after ſuch as may profit and adorn the Church, but preferring thoſe whom they love, by whom they have been obliged, or for whom Great Men have interceeded, and (not to ſay the worſt) *who by Money have obtained to be made Clerks.* Let me now ask again whether theſe Ordinations were not in Truth, as well as in St. *Jerom*'s Judgment, *contrary to Chriſt's Appointment*, and to the *Rules* preſcribed by the *Apoſtle*, 1 Tim. 3. Tit. 1. 5, 9. And if ſo, whether they could be *regular* in his own Senſe, that is, *according to the Will and the Appointment of God, for the conveying the Miniſterial Office* throughout all Ages? And if not, whether he muſt not be forced to own that the *regular Succeſſion hath been* de facto *interrupted.*

I proceed now to the dreadful Conſequences of this ſuppoſed Interruption of a regular Succeſſion, which he imagines muſt make it neceſſary for us either to eſpouſe the Principles of the *Independents*, or of the *Eraſtians*, neither of which we either do allow or need, our Aſſertion being only this: *That where God ſees an unknown and an unfruſtrable Defect in the regular Succeſſion*, He *himſelf will ſupply it to all that come duly prepared to receive holy Orders from an irregular Biſhop uſing the due Form of Ordination by Prayer and Impo-*

Impoſition of Hands. For (1ſt) The Caſe is here the ſame with that of a ſecret *Atheiſt*, *Infidel* or *Heretick* adminiſtring the *Sacraments*; for he who hath no *Chriſtian Faith* can be no *Member* of, much leſs a *Governor* in the *Chriſtian Church*; nor can he have any *Authority* from *God* or *Chriſt* to adminiſter theſe Ordinances. And yet if they obſerve the Form appointed for the Adminiſtration of thoſe Ordinances, God never will be wanting, ſaith our 26th Article, to let them have their due Effect on all who duly come prepared to receive them, ſeeing they have done all that God required of them for the Reception of this Benefit; it being highly unreaſonable to conceive GOD ſhould deprive the ſincere *Chriſtian* of theſe Benefits, by reaſon of the *Perſonal Sin* of the *Officiator*, unknown to, and unavoidable by him.

To make this ſtill more evident, let us conſider what can be ſuppoſed to be conferred by Ordination, it can be only (1.) the Aſſiſtance of the *holy Spirit*, to enable him who is ordained duly to execute that Office, and (2) Authority to execute it; the firſt is certainly the Gift of God, which therefore he will not deny to the due Recipient, by reaſon of the *Perſonal* Fault of the *Adminiſtrator*, which he could neither know nor hinder; and where God gives the

the Aſſiſtance requiſite to the Performance of the Office, he alſo gives *Authority* to perform it. And were it otherwiſe, the *Biſhops* in the *Greek Church* could have no *Authority* to execute that Office, ſeeing the Conſecration of *Biſhops*, *Prieſts* and *Deacons*, runs in this Form: *The Grace of God which perfects the Feeble, and heals the Weak, promotes this Perſon to be a Deacon, Prieſt, and Biſhop.* The *Biſhops* of the *Church of England* could have no Authority to execute that Office, they being only conſecrated by theſe Words: *Receive the Holy Ghoſt for the Office of a Biſhop.* And it deſerves our Obſervation, that all the Ordinations recorded in the New Teſtament do only mention *Prayer*, *the Impoſition of Hands*, and *the receiving of the Holy Ghoſt*; whence St. *Paul* charges the *Biſhops* of *Epheſus to take heed to the Flock over which the Holy Ghoſt had made them Overſeers*, Acts 20. 28.

Mr. *Stebbing* hath furniſhed us with three farther Arguments in Confirmation of this Truth; for p. 20, 21. he hath theſe Words: "If any Man thinks the "want of *Baptiſm* adminiſtred by *proper* "*Hands*, or any other *Perſonal*, or (per-"haps *latent*) *Defect*, *diſannuls Ordination*, "and would hence argue againſt an *un-*

" *interrupted Succeſſion*, I am not obliged " to anſwer for ſuch *Phanſies as theſe.*

Now the *Succeſſion* which we ſay hath not been kept up from the *Apoſtolick* Age to this preſent Time, is not barely an *uninterrupted Succeſſion*, which only ſignifies a Succeſſion without any long Vacancy, but *a regular and uninterrupted Succeſſion*, that is, ſaith Mr. *Stebbing*, p. 14. a Succeſſion agreeable *to the Rule according to which the Miniſterial Office ought of Right, that is, according to the Will or Appointment of God*, to be conveyed. Now if no *Perſonal Defect* diſannuls this Ordination, it is impoſſible it ſhould be diſannull'd, ſeeing there can be no Defect in any Perſon which is not *a Perſonal Defect*. But if want of conveying it according to the Will of God, and the Rules eſtabliſhed by the Catholick Church, will render the Succeſſion *irregular*, then is it here fully proved that *a regular and uninterrupted Succeſſion hath not been kept up.*

Miſcell. Obſerv.

2*dly*, Seeing no Defect can be *latent* with reſpect to that God who infallibly diſcerns who are qualified for the *Miniſterial Office* according to his Will, and who are not, it muſt be only *latent* with reſpect to Men; and if ſuch a Defect interrupts not the *Ordination*, becauſe it was *latent* and *infruſtrable*, it could not interrupt

rupt the *Ordination* of our first *Reformers*, who doubtless did not repair to them for *holy Orders*, whom they knew to be unable to confer them.

3*dly*, Mr. *Stebbing* saith *he will not determine how far God will dispense with them who follow another Ministry, because it is the only Ministry they can get, because he knows no Rule in the Gospel by which it can be determined.* Let then the *Irregularity* of *Papal Ordinations* be such as is here represented, it being then the *best that could be had*, it could not render their *Ministerial Office* null, nor lessen the Benefit of it to them who received the *Ordinances of the Gospel* from their Hands.

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